

Mukawir — A timeless place

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Dome of the Rock in pictures

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Russia and Iraq reach deal to develop oilfield

By Robert Corzine and Roula Khalaf
LONDON—Iraq's parliament has ratified an oil agreement with Russia in defiance of the hardening US attitude towards Baghdad.

Russia says the agreement does not violate the United Nations embargo governing investment in Iraq and unauthorized export of Iraqi oil, but western diplomats said it threatened to undermine sanctions put in place seven years ago.

The Russian deal, to develop the Qurna oilfield in southern Iraq, is the most detailed agreement to emerge between Iraq and foreign companies keen to gain access to the world's second largest oil reserves.

Some western oil companies have reached "understandings" with Iraq regarding the development of certain oilfields, although such arrangements are thought to fall short of contracts.

But Baghdad newspapers have claimed that the deal includes a commitment that the Russians spend \$200 million on activities related to the project, in spite of sanctions. A \$100 million loan to Iraq for equipment is another requirement. Russian oil executives were not available to comment on whether the money would be spent inside Iraq.

Western oil companies said the Russian deal went beyond other arrangements which had been made with Baghdad. Elf Aquitaine, the French oil group which was one of the first western companies to resume talks with the Iraqis after the end of the Gulf war, said it only had an assurance that it would be treated favorably once the embargo was lifted.

Although Russia has agreed not to go ahead with the development until the sanctions are lifted, one western diplomat said a "grey area" in the sanctions regime could allow some investment to be made in oil facilities in Iraq, already owned by the Russians. Russia developed 15 oilfields in Iraq prior to the Gulf war.

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World Bank Social Security Package Critics fear program is a first step to settle refugees

By Raed Al Abed

Star Staff Writer
As Palestinians and Israelis grapple over what to do next to overcome the political impasse created by the building of a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem, attention is slowly focusing on an unaddressed problem on their thorny agenda: the fate of Palestinian refugees. Fears of schemes to settle the refugees in their host countries are being expressed loudly.

In Jordan, a country playing host to the largest number of Palestinian refugees, opposition to attempts to create de facto settlements has been growing in the past few years.

In recent days, such worries resurfaced since Jordanian officials unveiled details of a "social security package" which included JD173 million for refugee camps, JD145 million for local councils and JD 97 million for smaller projects.

The World Bank will finance the first stage, estimated at JD 92 million, of the JD 431 million package. A ministerial committee, headed by Dr Jawad Al Anani, deputy prime minister for service affairs and minister of state for prime ministry affairs, has started discussing the program which aims at, according to official sources, "supporting the social infrastructure, fighting poverty and encouraging productivity" in local councils.

28 housing areas and 13 refugee camps.

As far as refugee camps are concerned, the unveiling of the package could not have come at a worse time. As the peace process falters, the debate over the future of Jordan's estimated two million Palestinian refugees (UNRWA says they are only 1.3 million) is heating up. The majority of these refugees have enjoyed Jordanian citizenship since 1950s.

There are 13 refugee camps in Jordan home to about 300,000 refugees. Services for these camps is provided by the Dept. of Palestinian Affairs of the Foreign Ministry and UNRWA. The UN agency recognizes only 10 camps.

"The role of Jordan is to help the Jordanian community of Palestinian origin to achieve their objective in returning home and we are talking about those who wish to do so, it is their option," said Marwan Doudin, head of the Jordanian delegation for the Multinational Refugee Working Group, which was formed as an outcome of the peace treaties signed by the Palestinians and Israel and by Jordan and Israel. "We are keeping the status of the 10 refugee camps as such with a United Nations flag

here and there because we do not want anyone to think that by improving the quality of life of Palestinians in refugee camps we are in any way prejudicing their right to return."

came after the peace process and this is something that we should take into consideration," Kamhawi said.

Kamhawi, who is an active member of the preparatory committee for "The Conference for the Right of Return and Self-determination for the Palestinians," said that the improvement of the quality of life inside the refugee camps should have been addressed years ago. "Now it is a political issue and it aims at canceling the status of the refugee camps and at settling the Palestinians and at canceling their right to return."

Article 8 of the Jordanian-

Continued on page 2

Majali leaves options open on elections

By Hamdan Al Hajj

Special to The Star
CONSPIRACY THEORISTS argue that the main reason behind the proposal to increase of Lower House seats from the present 80 to at least 100 ultimately has to do with fragmenting the electorate and reducing the chances of candidates in the coming Parliamentary elections.

Jordan will increase its electoral districts to 100, official sources predict. However, according to Prime Minister Abdel Salam Majali, the one-man-one-vote system will remain intact.

But, such an increase in the number of seats require much work. What needs to be discussed now is the "procedural process" that involves administrative divisions and electoral boundaries. What is being regarded as something of a novelty is that Jordanians will be issued for the first time

with "magnetic voting cards." The idea behind the revamping of the system is to increase the election turnout and get the electorate to the booths as fast and as little time as possible. But there is still misgivings.

In their meeting with the government last Monday, deputies called on the Prime Minister to delay issuing a temporary electoral draft law and run the coming elections on the previous law that was implemented in the 1993 elections.

Observers argue that the issue is deeper than that going to the heart of the continuation of the current Parliament; and in this respect there is tacit agreement between Lower House deputies and the government. If they stop calling for an extraordinary session the government promises not to dissolve Parliament. This means that deputies will be

able to continue to meet. However, this is seen by other political analysts as mere speculation. The government is still to make up its mind about what it will do. Rumor

has it the government is still thinking of either the months of May or June as possible dates for the dissolution of Lower House.

New settlement near Jabal Abu Ghneim

WORK ON a new Jewish settlement is to start soon in an area west of Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem. The Jerusalem Post reported this week.

As Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was in Washington discussing the peace process with US President Bill Clinton, Israeli Housing Ministry officials were putting the final touches on plans for a new settlement in East Jerusalem.

The paper stated that maps have already been prepared for the new colony near Beit Safafa in Arab Jerusalem, an area the Israelis call "Givat Hamatos". Palestinian villagers own land and have built homes adjacent to the planned building site.

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In Palestinian schools children learn the ABCs of national identity

By Marjorie Miller

RAMALLAH—The theme for the Aziz Shahn School's fourth-grade art class was written on the chalkboard in careful Arabic script: "Jerusalem is ours. We love peace."

Forty Palestinian girls in striped smocks bent over their desks to draw the golden Dome of the Rock from Jerusalem's Old City. They colored doves, olive branches and, atop each picture of the mosque, a black-white-green-and-red Palestinian flag.

"Why do we want peace?" the art teacher asked the class. "So all of the prisoners will return to Palestine," said one student.

"So we will have a homeland," answered another. "To free Jerusalem from the Jews who took it from us," said a third.

The teacher beamed with pride.

If Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu holds any expectations that the Palestinians will become more flexible over time on such issues as Jerusalem and statehood, a peek into their public schools and new textbooks would convince him otherwise.

After nearly 80 years of foreign rule and Israeli occupation, Palestinian educators are in control of their classrooms for the first time and are using them to teach a new generation the building blocks of national identity. They are giving their first unencensored courses in Palestinian history, culture and citizenship—that is, membership in a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

But while enjoying their freedom from foreign domination, Palestinian teachers say they find it difficult to give some of these lessons in times of such political uncertainty: They are preparing students to become citizens of a state that does not exist. Half of the pupils drawing the Dome of the Rock have never visited Jerusalem and are prevented from doing so by Israeli closures.

And the peace that students are supposed to love is a process on the brink of collapse. Israel has broken ground for a new Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem, and Muslim extremists have responded by resuming terrorist attacks,



Palestinian students: Different kinds of textbooks

including three suicide bombings. In response, Israel froze peace negotiations and closed the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The self-governing Palestinian Authority cut off security cooperation with Israel, and Palestinian youths have taken to the streets for daily clashes with Israeli soldiers.

For decades, Palestinian identity was defined almost entirely by the struggle against Israel for a Palestinian homeland and, on a personal level, by confrontations with Israeli soldiers. It was nurtured in tightly knit Palestinian families and in their communities, some scattered around the globe.

But under the Israeli occupation, any sign of Palestinian

nationalism—a flag or Palestine Liberation Organization insignia—was banned, and soldiers searched schools at will for what was considered to be enemy propaganda.

They would have removed even the needlepoint picture that now decorates Aziz Shahn principal Imtiyaz Nazzari's office with the motto "Peace and Justice for Palestine." In fact, they probably would have arrested her for having such an object.

Samir Adwan, a Bethlehem University education professor, notes that many political issues cannot be dealt with definitively: Maps are never permanent; political definitions rarely

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While Vanunu languishes in prison, Mossad agent 'Cindy' lives in comfort in sunny Florida

ORLANDO, Florida—The news is certain to mortify Mordechai Vanunu, jailed in Israel for revealing his country's nuclear secrets. As he struggles to keep his sanity after years of solitary confinement, the agent of his downfall,

a woman he once knew as "Cindy," is enjoying all the comforts of a sunny, palm-fringed corner of America.

Her notorious role in the capture of Vanunu, who was sentenced to 18 years in prison for exposing Israel's nuclear program in *The Sunday Times*, may have been the pinnacle of her career as a Mossad agent. Posing as an American tourist

in London 10 years ago, she lured Vanunu to Rome. He was drugged and bundled aboard a boat back to Israel, where he was charged with treason.

Today she is reaping the rewards of service to Mossad. The last Vanunu saw of "Cindy" may have been her features going fuzzy as he was knocked unconscious and given an injection by her accomplices in Rome.

Nobody had seen her or spoken to her since publicity caused her to go underground in 1988. She was believed to have been dispatched by Mossad to South America to lie low. Vanunu thought she might be dead—

murdered by the people who kidnapped him.

Far from it. She has resurfaced in Florida, the sunshine state, where a *Sunday Times* reporter confronted her last week.

While Vanunu's repeated pleas for the right to mingle with other prisoners are rejected with monotonous regularity by Israeli judges, Cindy, whose real name is Cheryl Ben Tov, zips about in a red convertible and sells time-share accommodation to ageing Jewish "snowbirds" migrating south for the winter.

She lives with her husband Ofr, a former major in the Israeli intelligence service, in a secluded villa in Orlando, close to Disney World and the John F. Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral. She has

breakfast with friends, swims in a luxury pool complex and drives the sports car to work.

She refused to give an interview to the reporter, but speaking in fluent, if deeply accented Hebrew, she did not deny her role in the affair. Her primary concern, she said, was that any story about her should not "harm" her position in America.

Her fears are understandable. According to acquaintances in Israel, the 37-year-old is on assignment abroad for the same employer as ever: Israeli intelligence.

Ben Tov was never cut out to be a time-share operative. Neither was her husband an obvious candidate to work for an Orlando real estate firm. Yet, so far as her friends in Orlando are concerned, such

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Weather Outlook

Normal spring weather is expected during the Eid Al Adha holiday. Sunny to partly cloudy skies are expected. Temperatures will be around their seasonal average (between 17 and 19 degrees in the mountainous areas). It will be cool at nights with temperatures around 3 degrees. It will be hot and sunny in Aqaba.



Mukawir

Where time stands still

Stephen Brannon
Special To The Star

HOW MANY times have you read a travelogue extolling the "thriving fauna and flora" of one of Jordan's natural attractions? Bounding off in search of a Garden of Eden teeming with exotic animals and lush, verdant foliage, you instead find a rather barren landscape with a few scraggly shrubs struggling to survive. Secretly you are disappointed, but you do not admit this to your friends.

There are a number of places mainly in the Ghor region where the land does indeed flow with milk and honey, but Jordan is not a tropical rain forest. The most unforgettable and inspiring places in Jordan are known not for their thriving wildlife, but for their rugged and austere beauty.

While Petra and Wadi Rum have been "discovered" by the shutter-bug tourist legions, there remain a few places where a breathtaking panorama can be enjoyed in wonderful solitude and silence. The tiny village of Mukawir is one of those places.

Located about 35 kilometers southwest of Madaba, Mukawir hosts one of Jordan's undiscovered gems, the ancient fortress of Machaerus. King Herod the Great built the structure on top of a steep hill overlooking the Dead Sea in the year 30 BC. Machaerus is similar to Herod's other mountain fortresses, namely Herodium, Alexandrium and Masada, found west of the Jordan River.

Machaerus is most commonly known

as the place where John the Baptist lost his head. The Biblical account tells us that the beautiful Salomé danced there for Herod, who promised to grant her one wish in return. Unfortunately for John the Baptist, Salomé asked for his head on a silver platter.

Modern scholars have placed this event within the context of the ongoing political intrigues of the period. When Herod the Great's successor, Herod the Tetrarch, divorced the daughter of the Nabatean king Aretas IV in order to marry his brother's wife, the southern kingdom rose up against Herod, defeating a force sent by him to quell the rebellion.

Herod's behavior with his new wife and her daughter, Salomé, led to a denunciation by John the Baptist. Eventually, Herod and Salomé grew tired of his fiery sermons, and had the holy man executed at Machaerus.

The site is currently undergoing restoration by the Antiquities Dept., although there are few walls of any height still standing. To be honest, Machaerus is archeologically neither interesting nor very important. The greatest attraction of this unknown treasure is the stunning panoramic view it presents of the surrounding landscape, the Dead Sea and the West Bank. On a clear night, you can easily make out the lights of nearby Jerusalem and Jericho.

The walk up from the small parking lot to the top of the hill takes only 15 minutes. From the top, carefully descend to the westward ridge. There

you will find a path which extends all the way down to the Dead Sea. From the top of Machaerus (700 meters above sea level) to the Dead Sea (400 meters below sea level) is quite a drop.

A round trip takes about 10 hours at a moderate pace, but the uphill climb can be extremely hard. Bring plenty of water, and consider hitchhiking back to a predetermined place, as the path crosses the main Dead Sea highway. Those with fewer masochistic tendencies can still enjoy a rewarding one- or two-hour hike extending the length of the main ridge.

To get to Mukawir, take the King's Highway south from Madaba. Turn right at the town of Libb, and continue along the road until it comes to a dead end in front of Machaerus.

Chances are good that once you climb up



the hill you won't see or hear anyone else, with the notable exception of the shepherds and their flocks who still find shelter in the myriad caves and grottoes around Mukawir.

Listen to their voices waft across the barren gorges and breathe in pure air laced with the salt of the Dead Sea. You will be transported back into Biblical times. ■

Learning the ABCs of national identity

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"Reality changes. Remember that in the late 1970s, the Camp David agreements were rejected by most Palestinians as treachery. Then, in the 1990s, we Palestinians made agreements weaker than Camp David and call it an achievement," Adwan said, referring to the accords that brought peace between Israel and Egypt.

The Palestinians who signed that peace agreement run the self-rule government and, under that, the Education Ministry. The Palestinian Legislative Council ultimately will set the guidelines for the texts, which are not likely to be critical of the peace process.

Nor will they read like Israeli texts. The interpretation of events by the one-time enemies will remain at odds, much as US and Mexican history books tell different versions of

the Mexican-American War.

"We don't see our freedom fighters as 'terrorists,' just as Jewish texts say the Hagana was a national resistance movement," Adwan said, referring to the Jewish underground that fought for the establishment of Israel. "We call our commanders 'fedayeen'—those who sacrifice their lives for others. To us, they are heroes. The Israelis call them gangs and terrorists."

The Education Ministry has

produced one set of textbooks so far, paperback civics books for grades one through six that define such concepts as homeland, statehood and citizenship.

The Palestinians are defined as descendants of the Canaanites—who predated the Israelites—a people who speak Arabic and live in the land of Palestine. The authors seem to have avoided the question of how to portray the Jews, because Israelis are largely absent from these books.

For the students at Aziz Shalhin, Palestinian statehood hovers somewhere between reality and dream. The girls learn traditional dances, practice the detailed embroidery of Palestinian dresses and set up displays on rural Palestinian life—all elements of a national culture. In the school courtyard each morning, however, the girls hallow out the anthem of a nation still in the making.

"Freedom fighter, freedom fighter," they sing by heart. "By my resolution and my fire and the volcano of my revolt, by the height of the mountains and the tremor of the struggle, by the hurricane winds and the fire of the weaponry, Palestine is my home. Palestine is my fire..." ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Critics fear program will open way to settle refugees

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Israeli peace treaty on refugees, states that solving the case of displaced persons—the refugees of West Bank and Gaza after the 1967 war—will be negotiated in a quadripartite committee together with Egypt and the Palestinians. The fate of 1948 Palestine refugees is being discussed in the framework of the Multilateral Working Group on Refugees.

Article 8 also provides options for dealing with the refugee issue "through the implementation of agreed United Nations programs and other agreed international economic programs concerning refugees and displaced persons, including assistance for their settlement."

"As long as there is a Palestinian refugee problem there can never be peace as such and nobody will be able to claim that there is peace," Kamhawi added. "Solving the refugee problem is part and parcel of the peace process, and it has been tacitly agreed upon by parties concerned and the international powers that the solution to the refugee problem will not be through repatriation but through settlement, and other

means, short of the return of all these people to their homeland in Palestine."

The total number of Palestinians in Palestine (West Bank, Gaza and Israel) and in the diaspora is estimated at seven million, as international and Palestinian statistics state. About 30 percent of them are living in West Bank and Gaza Strip including East Jerusalem, while 11.9 percent are living in Israel. About 58.1 percent, 4.2 million Palestinians are in the diaspora, according to 1995 statistics.

And 50.9 percent of the Palestinians are living in Arab countries, and 7.2 percent in the rest of the world.

The setting up of UNRWA came after the so-called [American] Johnson Proposal in early 1950, which was aimed at settling the Palestinian refugees in their host countries. UNRWA's mandate is restricted to providing humanitarian aid. However, this service is under threat from time to time, especially by donor countries. The agency is under threat to end its services by the end of this century.

In 1951, there was a setback regarding international obligations towards Palestinian refugees when the International Refugee Convention was ratified in 1950. The convention excluded Palestinian refugees from international protection, which stresses on the refugees' right of return to their homeland or to settle in their host country if they do not wish to return.

Article 49 of UNRWA's mandate states that any assistance provided to refugees should not violate, in any way, article 11 of UN resolution no. 194 which underlines the right

of return or compensation for Palestinian refugees.

"UNRWA must continue to survive," said Dr Nafe' Al Hassan, and "its mandate has to be improved to find a mechanism to activate the right of return for the Palestinian people."

The existence of UNRWA "is a witness to the tragedy of Palestinian refugees," Al Hassan said, who is an expert on refugee affairs and the application of international law in that regard.

While Al Hassan agrees that the refugee camps require improvements, he warned that any improvement "should not be linked with a resettlement program."

"It is not within our terms of reference as a Jordanian government to decide on whether a refugee is to return home or not, this is a personal choice," Douidin emphasized. "This is a matter for the PNA to be tackled in the final stage of negotiations, and we of course support the Palestinian negotiator," but "as long as these persons are outside Palestine and in Jordan they must be treated as 100 percent Jordanians."

"We are not talking about the rights of Jordanian citizens who are of Palestinian origin, but about the right of people of Palestinian origin to return to Palestine, without jeopardizing their status as Jordanians, or as Lebanese or Americans because their citizenship should not be an impediment to their rights in Palestine," Kamhawi said. ■

Seminar on WTO to be held in Amman

THE FRIEDRICH Naumann Foundation is organizing a two-day conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO) between 28-29 April. The venue, that is organized with the cooperation of ESCWA, will concentrate on the entry to the WTO. On the second day, there will be two working sessions on the effects of the WTO on agriculture and textile and clothing.

Participants include experts and political figures from Egypt, Jordan and Palestine, in addition to prominent resource persons from WTO headquarters in Geneva. Arthur Dunkel, the former GATT director will also take part. ■

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Cindy lives in comfort in sunny Florida

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leader of the Labor party next month, as well as to Ehud Yatom, current head of Mossad. The Ben Tovi villa is large, with extensive gardens.

Ben Tovi continues to work for Mossad, according to her Israeli neighbors. She and her husband, they believe, have rented out their house while she is engaged on an overseas assignment.

It was in 1977 that Cheryl Hanin, who grew up in luxury in Florida, started to work as an Israeli agent. Her parents were going through an acrimonious divorce and, on the advice of her rabbi, she threw herself into her academic and religious studies, culminating in a three-month residential course in Israel. She learnt Jewish history and Hebrew.

She left America at the age of 17 never to return back until 18 months ago.

Having scored high marks in army tests, she was recruited into the Nahal unit, which divided its time between military service and agricultural labor. Working in the Yadhana kibbutz, one of the most left-wing in Israel, she met Ofer, a bulky, naive-born Israeli who would later join military intelligence. They were later married.

Cheryl's unusual intelligence—scoring 140 in an IQ test—and her American background and obvious commitment to Israel, made her a natural recruit for intelligence.

Mossad contacted her under the guise of an invitation to the "prime minister's office." Three days of exhaustive psychological tests were followed by two years of intensive training, during which she was taught, among other things, to shoot a man from 100 yards, navigate speedboats, spot "tails" and use sophisticated radio equipment.

Then she was told she had been chosen to be a female escort, participating in Mossad operations all over the world. She was disappointed. The best women were sent to Arab countries to work undercover.

In September 1986 she was in Israel enjoying a long, lazy weekend when she was summoned to the headquarters in Tel Aviv of the overseas Kaysaria unit. She was told that she was to fly the same day to London under the name of Cynthia Hanin, her sister-in-law. A team of Mossad agents was already assembling in London from many different parts of the world, under the direction of Beni Zevi, the agency's deputy head. The message of prime minister Shimon Peres was clear: find Vanunu and bring him to Israel alive.

Peres was livid that Vanunu, a technician in the country's nuclear research center in Dimona, should have told the world the truth about Israel's burgeoning atomic bomb capacity, which Israel vigorously denied. "Bring the son of a bitch back here," he ordered Nahum Admoni, then head of Mossad.

Vanunu, lonely and confused, had been advised repeatedly by *The Sunday Times* to be careful in his private life as he awaited publication of his revelations. In particular, he was exhorted not to go abroad. But when "Cindy," apparently a trainee beautician from Florida, attracted his attention during a "chance" encounter in Leicester Square, he was hopelessly smitten.

When she invited him to her sister's vacant apartment in Rome, he was lost. No sooner had they arrived at the flat than the young Moroccan-born Israeli was knocked unconscious, drugged and spirited to Israel on a Panamanian-registered vessel waiting off the Italian coast.

The world was outraged. Vanunu was sentenced to 18 years in prison. He has been in solitary confinement ever since.

Appeals for clemency from every quarter have met a stony response from Israeli authorities, who seem determined that he should serve every day of his sentence. Though still defiant and protesting—the moral justice of his case, Vanunu's mental health is said to be deteriorating. ■

Earth Day celebrated at American Embassy

IN CELEBRATION of the Earth Day, the American Center of the US embassy in Amman is hosting a series of seminars on Tuesday, 29 April.

Seminar on "Sustainable Development" from 9am to 12:00. Panelists Dr Jawad Anani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Development Affairs; Dr Safa El Deen Hamed from the World Bank, currently working as an environmental planning consultant in North America and the Middle East; and Architect

Ramzi Qawar, owner and Director of the Development Community Group.

The panelists will address issues of public participation in sustainable development, as well as the business and environmental requirements for sustainable development. The seminar will be conducted in English.

The American Center in cooperation with the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, *Ad Dustour* newspaper, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, and the

Jordan Environment Society sponsored a drawing competition under the title Jordan: Sky, Earth & Water for Jordanian children. The three prize winning drawings celebrating the environment will be reproduced as Jordanian postage stamps in 1998. All children drawings will be exhibited at the American Center on Earth Day, from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Everyone interested is welcome to attend and participate in Earth Day activities. For more information: call 820101. Ext. 3579. ■

Russia and Iraq reach deal to develop oilfield

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The degree to which foreign oil companies can prepare for projects in Iraq is unclear. Although companies say they will not undertake development work before the lifting of the embargo, there have been low-key contacts between technical specialists.

Lukoil, Russia's biggest oil company and the leader of the Russian consortium involved in the Qurna contract, has previously said pre-

liminary work could include geological and technical preparation, as well as providing equipment not banned by the UN.

Madeleine Albright, the US secretary of state last month said Iraq's elimination of weapons of mass destruction would not be enough for a total lifting of sanctions, and made it clear that sanctions would be in place as long as Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi president, remained in power.

Iraq's strategy has been to use the foreign oil deals and the prospect of big infrastructure rehabilitation contracts to increase pressure for an end to the embargo.

President Saddam uses such deals at home to project an image of a normalization of relations with the outside world. ■

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Striking st

■ Hundreds of students are striking in Jordan. They are protesting against the government's policy of privatization while they are working. A number of hospital patients' vaccinations were still under investigation. Industrial activities

Tabba's c

to deal with
■ Economic reform in the Council of Amman. Council members are freezing of interest rates as long as the latest Occupied Territories that Israel does not agree to the rights of the of settlements economically. It continues to m Arab business region.

Jerusalem

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An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Striking students say they'll be back

Hundreds of medical students staged a protest last week outside the University Teaching Hospital of the University of Jordan. They were angry at the university administration for failing to guarantee them proper medical protection. The students say they want comprehensive medical insurance while they are under training because of the nature of their work. A number of students have contracted diseases from hospital patients simply because protection such as vaccinations were not provided by the university. The issue is still under investigation and students are promising more industrial action if their demands are not met.

Tabba'a calls on Arab businessmen to deal with Israel

Economic normalization with Israel is strongly rejected by the Council of Arab Businessmen (CBA) that is based in Amman. Council secretary Mr Hanadi Al Tabba'a called for a freezing of relations between Arab businessmen and Israel so long as the latter continues with its aggressive policies on the Occupied Territories. He said Arab businessmen must realize that Israel does not respect international resolutions, peace agreements nor the peace process and has turned its back on the rights of the Palestinians by continuing with the building of settlements. He described Israel as politically and economically extremist saying it "does not give and take", "continues to monopolize the Palestinian market," and "we as Arab businessmen should help to add to its isolation in the region."

Jerusalem is calling

The MBC television that was held to support the Arab population of Jerusalem last week was seen as an embarrassment. After 24-hour nonstop broadcasting total contributions collected were slightly more than \$7 million. It is now said that the television should not have been staged in the first place because it blatantly showed the cracks in the Arab world, something which makes the Israelis feel very happy. Mr Hazzem Nusseibeh, a former Jordanian official may have put his finger on it when he said "it appears that Arab citizens have lost all hope and are reflecting 'a don't care mood.'" The television expected the contributions to reach the billion mark.

Shooting at the bridge

A Palestinian woman crossing the King Hussein Bridge shot and wounded two Israeli soldiers on the side that is controlled by Israel. A Palestinian woman was also wounded in the attack. The 29-year-old Sonia Al Raeli, from the West Bank town of Qalqilya, fired at least three shots before she was apprehended and the gun taken away. The woman hid the gun under her clothes, took it out and started shooting at the Israeli soldiers just before she was searched. Al Raeli said she carried out the attack to mark the anniversary of the death of her brother, Ibrahim, who died on 12 April 1988 in an Israeli jail whilst being tortured.

Prime Minister Abdel Salam Al Majali received Mr Andrew Robinson, the Canadian coordinator for the peace process, at the Prime Ministry, Monday. Talks centered on the peace process and the issue of Palestinian refugees in particular. Dr Majali said the Jordanian government appreciates the role of Canada in this regard.

He said the refugee issue will never be solved unless they gain a political identity and this will never be achieved unless a Palestinian state is established on Palestinian soil. Mr Robinson said that his country is now trying to kick start the peace negotiations and to remove the obstacles especially on the Palestinian-Israeli track. He added that the solution to the Palestinian refugee issue ultimately lies on the principles of the peace process. (See front page story).



Prince Hassan presents academic excellence awards

UNDER THE patronage of Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath, a ceremony was held at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman last Monday for the presentation of the 'Al Hassan bin Talal Award for Academic Excellence'.

The award was established first in 1995 to encourage excellence in science, technology, and education, and enhance scientific and technological activities in all concerned institutions in education and training. It was introduced on the 30th anniversary of the naming of Prince Hassan as Crown Prince. It is targeted at boosting creative and inventory activities of certain categories in the community which are the key elements in the development process.

These categories include higher education organizations, general education institutions and professional and technical education.

Winners for the 1997 awards were announced last month. There were 14 applications submitted by nine universities and organizations.

The first prize was withheld for this year by the awards committee because none of the

entries met the required standard.

The second award went to a "Communicative Project with Industry," presented by the Department of Industrial Engineering at the University of Jordan.

The third prize was given to the Department of Islamic Numismatics at the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology at Yarmouk University.

The fourth award (equal to the third) went for the building of a mathematics information project. It was submitted by the College of Educational Sciences, run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Amman.

The first ceremony was held in 1996 to honor winners



TRH Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath award the prizes. Nancy Bakir of the Higher Council of Science and Technology looks on.

of the award. The first prize went to the Bacheloria School in Amman for its program "Creation, Activity and Services." The second prize was withheld, while the third went to the Abdul Hameed Shoman

Foundation for its translation of a book titled the "Normal Child." The awards for this year were presented by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath.

People & Politics

White revolution, part two

The message to the opposition is clear from Prime Minister Abdel Salam Majali: Keep them guessing! The elections will be held, but no date is set. No international observers, but all are welcome to observe. As to the number of deputies, the legal voting age, the number of districts, the opposition will have to wait until a temporary law is passed by the government and when is that to take place? Only Dr Majali knows.

It was a typical Majali meet-the-press encounter. The kind we got used to during his first two governments. The ever optimistic physician-turned-politician made a quick diagnosis of the ailing Jordanian economy. He admitted that a recession is crippling the Jordanian economy and that investments were slow in coming in. He promised to do away with government red-tape and make it easy for foreign investors to register a company that all they would require is hand in a piece of paper to the concerned official body!

Dr Majali talked about decentralization, about changing people's mentality and attitude towards manual work, and about many other things. This is all good news. But can the government put its money where its mouth is? Is the reform process as easy as the Prime Minister makes it sound?

The impression one gets from Saturday's press conference is that Dr Majali is embarking on what we might call, for lack of a better expression, a second white revolution. If former Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti's Achilles Heel was the removal of bread subsidies, then Dr Majali's own could be reducing the size of the civil service. On the other hand, the way this government will handle the coming elections will correspond directly to its popularity in the street.

The opposition has tried, unsuccessfully, to pre-empt Dr Majali's elections agenda. But the man is calm and collected and there is no reason to believe that he will relent and submit to the opposition's demands.

One area where Dr Majali appeared to take a different approach altogether from that of his predecessor is Iraq. His statements about our eastern neighbor were clear cut: that Jordan has no intention to interfere in the internal affairs of the Iraqi people. Such a position will be well received by all Jordanians whose sympathy for the Iraqi people is sometimes difficult to separate from their sympathy for the Iraqi leadership.

Is he or isn't he?

Dr Samir Mutawa's ministerial portfolio has created a constitutional row. The Minister of State for Information Affairs says he is in effect a Minister of Information, just like his predecessor. But legal experts think not. They say he should be named as minister of information, unless the ministry of information is cancelled or that a Royal decree should assign him the portfolio of the said ministry. Until his fate is decided by the concerned legal bodies of the land, Dr Mutawa will have to wait a while. Since the last government had begun the work of deconstructing the Ministry of Information as a first step to abolish it, Dr Majali's decision to name a state minister for information affairs was seen as an indication that he was following on Kabariti's doctrine. But it seems while Dr Majali is clear about this, Dr Mutawa is not. In a recent meeting with the press corps, he brushed aside reporters' questions on the subject by saying that he was in effect minister of information. Well, it seems legal experts have another view.

A kiss is just a kiss...

Away from politics, some Jordanians were engaged in heated debates over the first public lip kiss in recorded Jordanian history. The kiss took place on stage as part of a Jordanian play, "Hey, There", during the International Theater Festival which ended last week. Naturally, like all first things, the kiss aroused public reactions at all levels. And naturally there were those who attacked the kiss as an indication of a further collapse in our moral values, and there were those who believed this was not your ordinary kiss, but part of an artistic expression. Let's hope *farwas* will not be issued and the debate will not go beyond the exchange of messages on NETS electronic bulletin board. No one bothered to talk about the value of the play itself, written by Fuad Abu Hileh, which according to the festival's official guide deals with the dilemma of life and death since Adam and Eve were expelled from heaven. Just like the original Adam and Eve, the two-person cast, Suhair Fahed and Muhiaseb Aref, may not have realized what they were getting into.

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Presents its warmest wishes to His Majesty
King Hussein
on the happy occasion of
EID AL-ADHA

JORDAN ELECTRIC POWER
Presents its warmest wishes to His Majesty
King Hussein
on the happy occasion of
EID AL-ADHA

Agricultural Marketing & Processing Co.
Presents its warmest wishes to His Majesty
King Hussein
on the happy occasion of
EID AL-ADHA

The Management and Staff of Jordan Cement Factories
Extend their heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty
King Hussein
on the happy occasion of
EID AL-ADHA

The Management and Staff of MUNIR SUKHTIAN GROUP
Extend their heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty
King Hussein
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EID AL-ADHA

The Management and Staff of Jordan Industrial Estates
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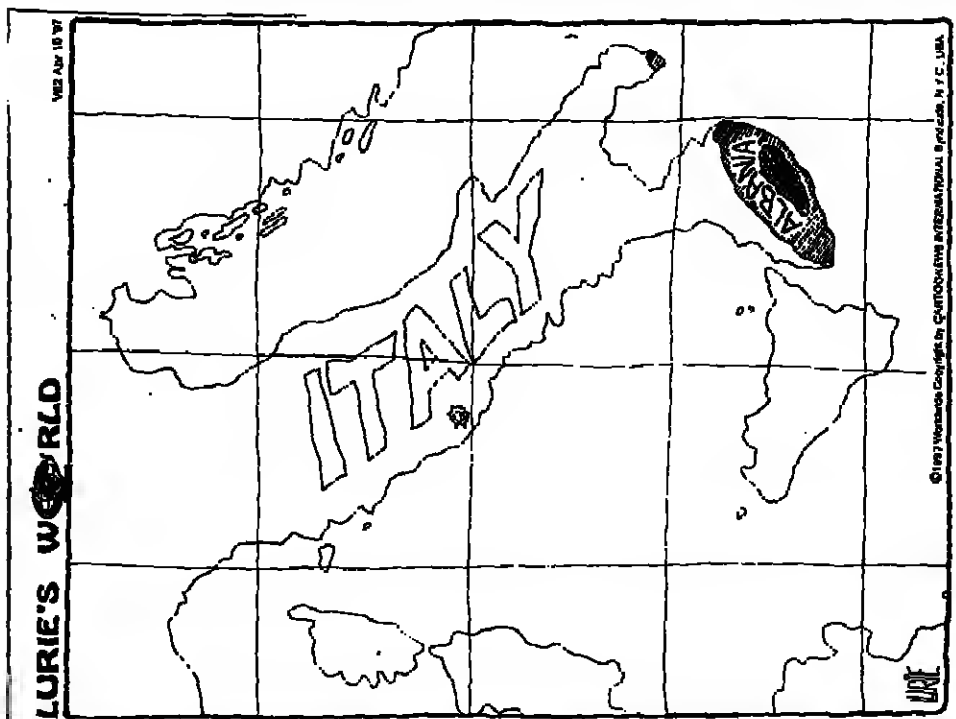
Royal Automobile Club of Jordan
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Our Say...

What kind of elections?

PRIME MINISTER Abdel Salam Majali is keeping his cards close to his chest. This week he met with the press, senators and deputies but none could say exactly what Dr Majali has in mind for the upcoming general elections. For the government to keep a low profile as it studies all available options, one has to give credit. But that credit is soon taken away if one senses that the government is as confused as the rest of us. Dr Majali's maneuvers are typical of his unemotional and cool-headed approach to dealing with critical problems and issues. It would be a shame if that cool-headedness and the "keep them guessing" style of running things ends with our discovery that the government was only buying time without having a notion of what it intends to do.

Ignoring the political confusion that we find ourselves in today will not make it disappear. The fact remains that Jordan's electorate as well as political parties and activists would like to know the ground rules under which the coming elections will be held.

Dr Majali is non-committal about anything so far. He contradicts statements made by his own Minister of Interior, who is supposed to be in charge of the elections file. His move to meet informally with deputies, when Parliament is in a recess, to listen to them and even to discuss with them a new draft elections law is a good move—on the face of it. But whose interests does such an initiative serve? Will the deputies, meeting on *ad hoc* basis in the Gallery, have a real say on such an important law? What if the government does not like deputies' reactions to the draft? Will it submit to an unofficial vote, or press ahead regardless?

Dr Majali should not look as if he is taking the deputies for a ride. The fall-out of something going wrong will damage his government's stand more than anything and tarnish the integrity of the planned elections. So why doesn't he spell out his policy and stand by it?

What we have now is an election law that has been adopted by the deputies in their previous session. The present electoral law, known to the man in the street as the one-man, one-vote system, created so much controversy when it was issued as a temporary law by the then Prime Minister Dr Majali back in 1993. Now history is about to repeat itself. Dr Majali is talking about another temporary law, but this time he believes if he consults with the off-duty deputies, it will make it alright. But that is not the case. Any election law issued in the absence of Parliament will remain a controversial one.

Dr Majali should not waste any more time. He should come out now and tell us if the next elections will be held in accordance with the existing law or not. And if he is to draft a new election law, then meeting the deputies in the Photos Gallery, whenever he sees fit, will not cushion him or his government against public criticism or give his proposed law a sheen of parliamentary blessing.

While Jordanians have different views about what the election law should look like, all have one thing in common: they want a clean and honest elections. Dr Majali should assure us that his government will deliver such elections. ■

Letters to the Editor

Learning the ins and outs

To The Editor,

I would like to comment on an article printed in *Al-Awas* newspaper last 26 February. It was about immigrant investors, especially Arabs, losing a great deal of their investment capital in Canada. The article gave the impression that Canada was to blame for their loss and lack of judgment in which investment to choose.

I was shocked to read this article which gave information on a few limited cases. Since I've spent considerable time in Canada and had several business transactions there, I know for a fact of people who were not very secure financially and did not have the business knowledge required when they arrived in Canada—despite all this they became very well off.

We shouldn't blame Canada, the land of opportunities, the second largest country in the world, which has the best quality of life

standard in the world; instead we should blame ourselves.

Most of our Arab investors think they can make money the moment they lay their feet on Canadian soil, knowing that a lot of them don't have any kind of business experience, don't know anything about Canada's business requirements or don't even know English or French to start with.

Canada, actually isn't looking for those whose come without serious and appropriate business planning, because actually they will be a burden on the country, especially if they live on public assistance and welfare.

To make a long story short, I think an initial solution would be at least to know and study all you can about Canada, to become more sharp and business oriented and learn to speak some French or English other than yes, no, sorry, thank you and bye!

Waddah Al-Kilani
Amman

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Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

Osama El-Sherif

Managing Editor

Dr Morwan Al Asmar

Editorial Team

Raed Al Abed (Home News Editor), Ilham Sadeq (Economic Editor),

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Why Netanyahu and Arafat need each other

By Judy Dempsey

HARTZUFIM, AN Israeli satirical television series in which politicians are mercilessly mocked, recently ran a sketch few viewers will forget. It showed Mr Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, and Mr Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, sharing a bed which was supposed to symbolize the peace process.

The sketch was remarkable in that it showed how Mr Arafat had become accepted by Israelis, particularly since only a few years ago no radio or television station would even refer to the Palestinians and it was illegal for Israelis to meet members of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

It also showed how, despite all the vicissitudes of the peace process, both leaders need each other, even more so following the wave of unrest in the West Bank after Mr Netanyahu's decision to build a new Jewish settlement at Har Homa in Arab east Jerusalem. The question is who needs whom most.

The Oslo peace accords made any Israeli leader dependent on Mr Arafat and vice versa, since the accords are designed not merely to create confidence and trust. They are also about mutualism, requiring both sides to fulfil certain conditions leading eventually whether Mr Netanyahu accepts it or not to the creation of a Palestinian state. Above all the accords are a straitjacket for both leaders.

"It is the irreversibility of those accords which Netanyahu is only now realising," said Mr Meron Benvenisti, an historian and former deputy mayor of Jerusalem. "But he does not understand that Oslo also means both sides have to manage the conflict together."

For all his criticism of Mr Arafat in recent weeks, accusing him of giving a green light for terrorist attacks against Israeli targets, Mr Netanyahu has become increasingly reliant on the Palestinian leader to combat terrorism.

Last Thursday night he said Mr Arafat had co-operated in uncovering an underground cell run by Hamas, the militant Islamic movement, implying that since Israel's withdrawal from parts of the occupied West Bank, it needs the Palestinians more than ever for the exchange of information on security. Israel cannot manage alone.

But if Mr Netanyahu is reluctant to ad-



Amicable friends! Israel's satirical television program, Hartzufim, portrays a strange relations between Arafat and Netanyahu

mit his dependence on Mr Arafat, Mr Arafat is just as dependent on the Israeli leader. "The Palestinians have a second chance to have a state, having lost it in 1948," said Mr Benvenisti. "It is rare to have a second chance. Arafat cannot blow it now."

However, according to analysts, Mr Netanyahu will do everything possible to reduce the geographical size of that state, believing he can push the Palestinians into a small space or homeland.

"That is one of the reasons why he wants to rush forward to the final status talks, bypassing the Oslo interim agreement," said Mr Shmuel Sandler, a political scientist at the Bar Ilan University in Tel Aviv. But Mr Arafat will resist on the streets to prevent this happening, and to save Oslo.

The Israelis recognise the street is Mr Arafat's strongest card. It was the lessons of the intifada, the Palestinian uprising that showed that the coercive powers of the Israeli state could not break the will of the Palestinians. This led the late Mr Yitzhak Rabin to realise the conflict could not be "Israel has understood the limitations of

its power after the intifada," said Mr Benvenisti. "Netanyahu still has the coercive powers and Arafat has the power of the weak. But neither will emerge as victor with these weapons, which is the underlying point of Oslo."

In recent weeks, each side has used the weakness of the other's position to promote his own interests in what has evolved into a reverse co-operation. "But I still believe that there is no alternative to Oslo," said Mr Martin Kramer, director at the Moshe Dayan Centre think-tank at Tel Aviv University.

Mr Dennis Ross, the US special Middle East envoy, who has invested so much energy into Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is due to return to the region in a bid to break the impasse. "The Oslo process is the only one available," a senior diplomat said. "I don't believe the US is prepared to undo the straitjacket, Netanyahu, whether he likes it or not, has no other partner except Arafat whose state beckons."

Financial Times
Syndication

An Israeli view Yes, real peace is possible

By Aaron Lerner

I CAN well appreciate the disappointment of the "peace camp."

It is disappointing to be reminded that the Arab-Israeli conflict is not some neat trade dispute over cheese dumping between Belgium and Denmark. And it is sobering to consider that there are considerably more conflicts in the world like the former than the latter—at least in the sense that a necessary condition for postwar stability is firearms kept very much at the ready.

That said, I remain a firm believer in realistic negotiations.

And as someone who has spent more time talking with Palestinian leaders than most leftists, I am convinced that there are many Palestinians who, once they become convinced Israeli negotiators are serious, will be willing to accept the acceptable.

What is acceptable? A realistic arrangement, one that reflects reality—namely, that the Palestinian Authority cannot be relied upon to handle critical, security-related issues.

Among other things, this means:

■ They can't have an army; in fact, ultimately they will have to cut down the size and arming of their police force.

■ They can't be responsible for security checks at their ports.

■ They can't control access to places holy to Jews.

A violation of Arab honor? Member of the Knesset, Yael Dayan pointed out to me that the Egyptians have managed to swallow the idea of much of Sinai being demilitarized. And Lloyd's inspectors can check every container being unloaded in Aqaba to ensure that sanctions against Iraq are honored.

Freezing matters for a few years while the parties "build confidence" is impossible because we are living in changing societies. And anyway, a one-sided halt on construction wouldn't freeze the situation. I have yet to find a Palestinian willing to freeze Arab construction in Jerusalem or anywhere else.

Our neighborhood is dynamic. More happens here in a week than most places experience in a year.

Sure, the Palestinians will feel let down when their representatives agree to considerably less than a full-blown sovereign state. But the adjustment will come more quickly than anyone expects.



Demonstrations are likely to continue if Israel maintains its iron grip policy on the West Bank

Those who insist that the Palestinians will "never" accept anything short of the West Bank, Gaza and eastern Jerusalem under their intelligence and encourage them to be inflexible.

This position is not based on self-pity, nor is it fueled by hatred.

A number of years ago I attended a local panel discussion on the prospects for peace in the Middle East. The late Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz was one of the speakers, and he said something that both disappointed and angered me.

In the course of the discussion I cited the long history of

conflict in our region, much of which has nothing to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict, and asked Leibowitz what he thought the long-term prospects were for peace in the Middle East. Leibowitz replied that it was clear that peace, any peace, would not last forever, and that the most one could expect was peace for a few years, possibly decades.

He added, though, that Israel must make every sacrifice and take every risk in order to get a state of peace, no matter how fleeting.

There was no mystery about the difference in outlook between Leibowitz and myself: Being considerably closer to

the grave than the cradle, the professor felt compelled to see peace in his time at any price, and for any period.

For ourselves, and our children, we must reject the temptation to sell ourselves short in return for a fleeting photo opportunity.

A good, workable long-term agreement is possible. Real peace is possible. But what makes it so much harder to get there are voices on our side urging the Palestinians to hold out for more.

Dr Aaron Lerner is the director IMRA (Independent Media Review & Analysis in Israel) The Jerusalem Post.

CIA takes blame for error over Gulf chemicals

By Tom Rhodes in Washington

THE CIA made an unprecedented apology to Gulf War veterans after America's top spies admitted that an extraordinary intelligence blunder led to the possible exposure of thousands of American troops to lethal chemicals soon after the conflict ended.

In a report that contradicted three years of previous CIA accounts, the agency admitted that it had received numerous warnings since 1984 about chemicals stored at Khamisiyah, a remote ammunition depot in southern Iraq and the only site at which the Pentagon has admitted its servicemen may have been exposed to poison gases.

Despite evidence that thousands of weapons filled with mustard gas had been stored in the complex, intelligence analysts failed to inform an American military team. Consequently, the team later believed that it was safe to blow up the depot in the weeks after the end of the Gulf War.

The Pentagon last year announced that more than 20,000 American troops might have been exposed to nerve gas and other chemicals as a result of the explosions, provoking thousands of claims from veterans who alleged they had since suffered serious health problems.

In a formal apology, Robert Walpole, the official overseeing the intelligence investigation of Gulf War illness, said that the CIA experts had failed to research their records fully and had been fixated in a belief that the Iraqis stored chemical weapons only in S-shaped buildings unlike those at Khamisiyah.

"This is the chapter that lays out some not so pretty news," he said. "Intelligence support before, during and after the war should have been better." He added: "We should have given this information out sooner—if you're looking for an apology, I'll give that apology." A series of cables and other communication. Beginning in

1984 and continuing until days before American ground troops arrived seven years later, gave detailed warnings about the site and its employment during the Iran-Iraq war. In 1991, a day before the ground battle began in the Gulf War, an American ambassador passed the CIA information from the Iranian Air Force, which gave the precise co-ordinates for Khamisiyah and succinctly stated its use by Iraqis as a chemical weapons depot.

The CIA gave the data to the military's central command responsible for the Gulf region. However, the agency later admitted the US Army to say that analysts had been unable to identify a chemical facility at the suspected site. Mr Walpole said the CIA had "problems with multiple databases that contained several names for one site."

The Times

Fly
Daily
board

Busin
scen

■ The new leading
International
Investments
(AIMIG) is to be
launched at an estimated
cost of JD 20 million
into a fund which will
company assets in
hospitals and medical
equipment.

■ The company's
owners are from Jordan,
Gulf and from Arab
countries, says
AIMIG.

■ AIMIG has a
mission from the
Hashemite Kingdom
to invest in
Jordan, Zarkas and
a JD 15 million fund
to help to create a
new business sector
within the Jordanian
economy.

■ A Jordanian funds
company will be the
main project of the
fund, which is to be
launched in the capital.

■ The volume
of Jordanian shares
trading on the Amman
stock market last
weekend (JD 2.4M)
accounted for 2.1%
of the total value of
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traded last weekend.

■ Jordanian investors
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Reflecting the Change.



er Gulf chemicals

Nothing temporary about Sudan's 'temporary housing'

By Nicholas Goldberg

OMDURMAN, Sudan—Nihil Deng lives in the desert in a small shack built of burlap bags and plastic tarp and old newspapers—“temporary housing,” as it is known here at the Wad Al Basbir camp for displaced people.

But in fact, there's nothing very temporary about Deng's situation. She didn't arrive here last month or last year, but 13 years ago, in 1984, after fleeing the civil war that was raging near her home in the south. She was 22 years old.

Today, she no longer has plans to move on. She and her husband and six children are struggling to build a one-room mud hut on the grounds of the camp. They are using bricks made from the desert sand.

“It's so expensive,” she explained. “If you want ready-made bricks, you can't afford them. To make them yourself, you need to buy extra water, which we also can't afford.”

Deng is sitting at a table at the camp's crowded infant malnutrition clinic, while her listless son looks disinterestedly at a plate of sorghum cereal mixed with US-donated lentils. Nearby is Esterina Kamilo, 28, who has grown gaunt and sickly during the 12 years she's lived at Wad Al Basbir.

“Yes, we've been here a long time,” she said, leaning against the wall, holding her baby in her arms. “The worst enemy here is hunger. It's causing trouble and suffering for our whole family. The baby has become sick, and my body, too, has begun to change.”

The two women are not lazy or slothful or unwilling to pull themselves up out of dependency. Such long-term displacement is pretty standard among the 17,000 families at Wad Al Basbir—and indeed among most of the 1.8 million displaced people scattered through the Khartoum. Sudan has more people who have been driven from their homes than any other country in the world, according to UN officials here—about 4 million.

Despite the largest humanitarian relief effort ever mounted—including Operation Lifeline Sudan, the \$120 million-per-year relief program run by the UN—residents of the south of the country continue to leave their homes and flock north. Most are refugees from the civil war, which has been raging on and off since the country gained independence in 1956. The droughts and famines that plagued the country for more than a decade also have

spurred their flight.

In the north, former cattle herders and farmers become squatters or residents of official camps. The men go off to the war, or work as day laborers, and the families live in burlap shacks like Deng's, or in the mud and brick huts that are the sign of relative affluence here.

Every 20 feet or so at Wad Al Basbir, bricks are being dug from the dirt in the

According to Khider Daloum, the deputy field director for the British branch of Save the Children, himself a southerner, the serious displacement of southern Sudanese began in 1983, when the Sudanese People's Liberation Army under rebel leader John Garang started fighting in earnest with the Sudanese army, in a bid to gain autonomy.

The droughts in 1987 and 1988 in Bar-el-Ghazal and other provinces magnified the problem.

Many of the refugees came in stages, walking first from their towns to the riversides, and then to the boundary that divides south Sudan from the north.

Many families were divided, as men went off to join the SPLA or become fighters in some other militia, and the women migrated north. Some of the men who are off fighting have at least four or five wives, each living with children in the camps.

In the north, many of the displaced people suffer severe discrimination because they are Christian or believers in traditional, animist religions. Steady jobs are almost non-existent. Education is offered only in Arabic, rather than in any of the hundreds of languages of the southern tribes.

Although the government of Hassan al-Turabi in Khartoum says it is doing what it can for the displaced people, many of the private relief organizations say the government is more of an obstacle. Nor, by their own admission, are the relief agencies able to do the job adequately.

“We keep people alive, but at minimal standards,” said one UN official who asked not to be identified. In the months ahead, the living standards of the displaced people could deteriorate still further if the United Nations imposes new economic sanctions on Sudan for its reported connection to the attempted assassination of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in June 1995. Even UN officials agree that sanctions could prevent international aid agencies from delivering food and medicine.

At Wad Al Basbir, most people say they want to go home, back to the southern countryside where they grew up. But until the fighting stops, they say, they will remain at the camp.

“I want to go back as soon as I can,” said Kamilo. “I want to go home before I die.”

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Refugee camps continue to grow in Sudan with no end in sight

ground, molded and dried in the hot, shadeless sun. Another sign of affluence here: a deep, narrow hole in the ground with a plastic cover that serves as a toilet, with a makeshift wall around the outside for privacy. Only a few of the 17,000 families have any such luxury.

These toilets are being subsidized by some relief agencies here not for the sake of personal privacy but to fight some of the diseases that spread quickly and lethally. Diarrhea and dehydration kill hundreds. Malaria is epidemic, and cholera became a problem this year. Another problem is crime.

Kamilo said her mud hut had been entered just a few days earlier by thieves who stole her only bodsheet. In nearby houses, thieves have taken water containers, clothes and sandals from those who have them.

Malnutrition is one of the most serious. At the clinic run by the Fellowship for African Relief, the program for moderately malnourished infants is crowded with mothers and children sitting on blankets awaiting their rations. In summer, when diarrhea is worse, the program for the severely malnourished feeds about 110 babies a day, and the program for moderately malnourished feeds 350.

Senior Iranian aide linked to Saudi Arabia bombing

Saudi officials note, however, that they face a dilemma because if their American allies become persuaded Tehran murdered US servicemen, any US retaliation could lead to additional Iranian attacks against the kingdom

By David B. Ottaway and Brian Duffy

WASHINGTON—US and Saudi intelligence authorities linked a senior Iranian government official to a group of Shiite Muslims suspected of bombing an American military compound in Saudi Arabia last year, according to American and Arab officials.

Intelligence information indicates Brig. Ahmad Sherif, a senior Iranian intelligence officer and a top official in Iran's Revolutionary Guards, met roughly two years before the bombing with a Saudi Shiite arrested 18 March in Canada, officials said. Hani Abd Rahim Sayegh fled Saudi Arabia shortly after 25 June bombing that killed 19 American servicemen and wounded more than 500 others, according to Canadian court records.

Sayegh, 28, has been identified by Canadian authorities as “a direct participant” in the truck bomb explosion at the Khobar Towers. Canadian documents identify Sayegh as a member of Saudi Hezbollah, an Iranian-backed group.

The intelligence tying Sherif to Sayegh persuaded a growing number of officials in Washington and Riyadh of Iran's direct involvement in the attack. “Iran was the organizing force behind it,” one US official said last Friday.

“But several other US officials, noting the difficulty in assessing the fragmentary evidence available, said they have yet to be firmly persuaded of Tehran's role. The FBI, which has had no direct access to Sayegh in Canada or to other Shiite suspects in Saudi Arabia, declined to comment.

“God knows, there is still a lot to do, a lot to look into,” one government official said.

“If Iran, which has denied all complicity, is proven to have been involved, the Clinton administration could come under pressure to retaliate militarily or economically. The US

regards Iran as the world's sponsor of international terrorism, through its agents and through the underground action wing of Hezbollah, based in the Bekaa Valley of eastern Lebanon. The Lebanese Shiite political and social movement, which Iranian agents helped found, spawned Iranian-fostered replicas in other Arab countries such as those in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

Last week, a German court said the “highest state levels” of the Iranian government ordered the 1992 execution in Berlin of three Iranian Kurdish dissidents and their translator. The ruling caused most Western European nations to recall ambassadors from Tehran.

The evidence of Iranian links to the Saudi Shiites suspected in the Khobar bombing includes bank checks signed by Sherif, according to Arab sources. It is unclear whether the checks were given to Sayegh or other suspects in the attack.

Canadian and Saudi intelligence agencies collected much of their information about Sayegh's alleged role in the bombing, as well as his links to Iran, from intercepts of telephone calls to his wife and family in Saudi Arabia from Canada before he was arrested, according to these sources.

Unaware his phone was tapped over a seven-month period, Sayegh disclosed details of his role in the bombing and mentioned others with whom he had collaborated, the sources added.

US government officials said opinions are divided among authorities in Washington and Riyadh on the value of the telephone intercepts. While the evidence appears to show a conclusive link to Sherif, one official said, “it does not rise to the level (necessary) for a criminal prosecution.” One official said there is no hard evidence, for example, of Sherif's operational role in the attack.

Canadian court documents contend Sayegh drove a surveillance car behind the explosives-filled tanker used to demolish the Khobar barracks. Sayegh denied any involvement, contending he was in Syria at the time. He faces a deportation hearing 28 April.

Saudi authorities told the Clinton administration in November that they believed the bombing was the work of Saudi Hezbollah members, with Iranian complicity. US officials had been skeptical of the Saudi claim, in part because they believe Saudi Arabia has a vested interest in highlighting foreign influence.

Saudi officials note, however, that they face a dilemma because if their American allies become persuaded Tehran murdered US servicemen, any US retaliation could lead to additional Iranian attacks against the kingdom.

Moreover, the Saudi government has mixed views on how to deal with Tehran. Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah is currently spearheading a diplomatic opening to Iran. He recently met Iranian President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, who is scheduled to go to Saudi Arabia this week on a religious pilgrimage.

Sherif is a top Iranian intelligence officer, whose duties include organizing Hezbollah cells in Arab countries around the Arabian Gulf. US and Arab sources said. He is well-known to Saudi officials because he was implicated during a trial in Bahrain last year for 15 Bahraini Shiite dissidents convicted of several hotel and restaurant bombings. The attacks, which began in December 1994, killed more than 20 people.

Shiites living in Bahrain and those in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province, where Khobar is located, are closely linked by family ties and travel frequently across a 16-mile causeway that binds the two countries. Sayegh traveled many times to Bahrain to visit relatives, according to court documents.

Last June, six of the convicted 15 Bahraini conspirators read confessions in which they described being recruited by Sherif in 1993, while studying at a religious school in the Iranian holy city of Qom. Sayegh told reporters in Canada last month that he studied at Qom.

Arab sources said they believe that it was during Sayegh's stay in Qom that he was first contacted by Sherif. US officials said they think Sherif also may have met with Sayegh in Damascus about two years before the bombing.

One of the two leaders of the Bahraini dissidents, Ali Ahmed Kadhemi Mutaqawwi, said in his confession that Sherif, also known as Abu Jalal, selected him to recruit other Bahrainis studying in Qom and then helped him form the military wing of Hezbollah-Bahrain.

Mutaqawwi said they had been trained first at Karg Camp north of Tehran and then, after June 1995, sent to Hezbollah camps in Lebanon's Syrian-controlled eastern Bekaa Valley. Mutaqawwi eventually headed the military wing's financial committee and chief liaison to Iranian intelligence—whose main representative in dealing with the Bahrainis was Sherif, according to Mutaqawwi's confession.

Mutaqawwi also said Sherif provided the Bahraini plotters with financial support, through checks signed in Sherif's name and drawn from a Revolutionary Guard bank account in Iran.

US intelligence officials were at first skeptical of the alleged Iranian involvement in the Bahraini incidents. But last August, then-Assistant Secretary of State Robert H. Pelletreau issued a statement saying there was “credible evidence that a small group of Bahraini militants with a stated aim of overthrowing the (Bahraini) government had received assistance and training from Iran.”

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Post-Dayton pre-election Bosnia

Random impressions

By Yaqub Zaki

“WHAT SHOCKED you most in Bosnia?” people keep asking me since I got back. Probably a reply bawling the gutted houses or the gutted cemeteries or the vandalized mosques is what they expect. What shocked me most was none of these things: it was an incident that I witnessed during a bus drive to Bitov.

Muslims got off the bus at a roadside black-market stall manned by Serbs to buy cartons of cigarettes, using for the purpose money that might later be used to buy guns with which to kill their own people. This was done in full view of the other passengers, one of whom, a woman, had, only a few moments before, asked the driver to slow down so she could see her old home, now one of the ubiquitous gutted shells.

It will take more than four years of genocide, mass rape and ethnic cleansing to purge Bosnia of the effects of 70 years of Serb domination. Bosnia has only just set its foot on the ladder of Islamisation. Once, strolling through the beautiful Turkish quarter of Sarajevo, we saw two girls walking side by side. One was in full but tasteful hijab, whilst the other sported a mini skirt and a crop of artificially dyed blonde hair.

This little tableau epitomised the Bosnian predicament, a country situated on one of the fault-lines of history, where East meets West, fought over for centuries by antagonistic,

mutually-incompatible cultures, the end result of which is a schizophrenic society suffering from a massive identity crisis. Or so it was until the intrusion of the Enemy, in Serbian shape, brought people face to face with reality.

Reality, or its offspring realism, has recently made some inroads into the Bosnian psyche: mosque attendance and Islamic observance generally is around 50 percent, certainly up on what it was before.

Muslims seem more prone to delusion than most people, but, for once, in this conflict illusionism was on the other side: the British had expected the Muslims to be wiped out in a matter of weeks. A disarmed, defenceless population would not stand a chance, they calculated. The survival of the Bosnian borders is miraculous; indeed, they would not have survived had it not been for 1979 Iranian revolution. Iran kept up arms shipments throughout, and it was clear from the protocol, where the Iranian delegation was given pride of place, that the Bosnians know to whom they owe their survival.

Not until one sees the cemeteries can one comprehend the scale of the slaughter and the selfless sacrifice of the young men who left for the front. Not even the acres of graves in Behishte-Zahra outside Tehran can prepare one for the poignancy of Bosnian cemeteries. Only when I saw them did I fully appreciate what Ejup Ganic, the vice president, had said to us about “the young men

who went to the front knowing it was not likely they would return.” These were the flowers of a generation, Bosnia's hope for the future, for in a war it is always the best who get killed.

Ejup Ganic's reference to the shuhada occurred during a speech on the occasion of a dinner to honour the foreign guests who attended Mustafa Ceri's installation as Ra'is Al Ulama. The elegance of the setting, the well-trained waiters all spoke the influence of the old Austro-Hungarian empire; graciousness and charm shone throughout.

Ejup Ganic spoke without a single mistake in English grammar for some 10 or 15 minutes. After an interval, for the dinner, he was followed by Dr Ceric. He spoke brilliantly, totally at ease, free of the constraints that the presence of non-Muslims had imposed elsewhere.

This informal gathering at which the vice president, just back from Herzegovina, revealed in the course of conversation that the Croats would cave in the following morning was in vivid contrast to the formal ceremony of induction the previous day. This was held at the Sultan's Mosque on the riverbank, the Ghazi Husrev Bey Mosque being still in repair. As a result, the mosque was overcrowded with government dignitaries occupying the whole of the qibla wall.

The ceremony had great dignity. I could not make up my mind whether this were an inheritance from the Turks or because Bosnians, being European, do not lack a sense of the properties.

After two speeches, concise and worlds removed from the habitual oriental prolixity, Dr Ceric took the oath of office, reading from the portfolio in Bosnian and Arabic, ending Ustima (I swear). These formal proceedings were preceded by *tilawah*, and the choir sang the Salam most beautifully.

On a higher note, we had to attend a celebratory concert in the Opera House the same afternoon. The music was ghastly, and not improved by the sight of Karl Bildt sitting in the box opposite. More interestingly, we noticed the cardinal who as head of the Roman Catholic Church in Bosnia was sitting in the front row. I resolved to buttonhole him at the first opportunity. It presented itself in the foyer. I went up to him and said, “I should like to ask Your Eminence a theological question: why do you not excommunicate these people in Mostar who have committed these terrible crimes?” His reply fell somewhat short of the truth. He said there was no sentence of excommunication in Bosnia. He must have taken me for an idiot: excommunication can't take place anywhere. This disingenuous reply puts a question mark over the cardinal's loyalty.

The mosque in which the induction ceremony was held came through the bombardment unscathed, although the National Library, almost directly opposite, is totally gutted. The old Turkish quarter, with its extensive bazaars attesting to Sarajevo's one-time importance in the economy of the Balkans, is absolutely intact. The low Ottoman buildings came through the four-year ordeal

much better than the tall structures built during the communist era. By demolishing these hideous sites the Serbs have done the Bosnians a favour.

The task of reconstruction is daunting. We saw more burned-out houses than demolished ones, showing that the object was “ethnic cleansing,” to prevent people from returning. Every town or city we saw suffered damage. Walls were pock-marked from bullets or shrapnel; minarets particularly were targeted by Serb gunners because they served as observation posts.

Curiously, there were some notable buildings in the Egyptian-Islamic style, including structures of major importance like the National Library. It had a central dome surmounting galleries supported on immense granite columns, which were cracked and fissured from the heat produced by the combustion of thousands of books.

When I saw the library on television with the flames gushing from the windows I knew I had seen it all before: in 1499 Cardinal Cisneros ordered the library of the Arab university of Granada (Al Madrasah Al Yusufiyah) to be burned in Bilbarramba (Bab Al Ramlah) Square. There is nothing new in history. When the destruction of a people has been decided upon, it does not suffice with their biological elimination, it is necessary to destroy their cultural monuments so that not a trace of their quondam presence remains, genocide and culturicide go hand in hand.

An even greater tragedy than the National Library's was the loss of the Oriental Institute, which was shelved because it stored old deeds, cadastral surveys and waqfiyyat proving Muslim ownership of the land. At one time the entire bazaar quarter was waqf property, and the communist expropriation is still law because Parliament has not had time to introduce legislation abrogating the laws passed under Tito.

Rebuilding the country's lost heritage is the responsibility of the Education Ministry. Bosnia lost more than 2,000 cultural monuments. Whilst Muslim governments are prepared to donate for the restoration of demolished or damaged mosques, it was more difficult to find donors for humbler structures like housing and pieces of civil architecture. We outlined our scheme for twinning mosques, one Bosnian mosque to one British mosque, whose congregants would contribute to the rebuilding of the former.

Other rewarding encounters took place. I recall an hour in the editorial offices of *Preporod*, the leading Islamic newspaper. In our interview we emphasised that British Muslims viewed the inauguration of Dr Ceric as marking a potential turning point in the history of Islam in Europe; we saw him in a greatly expanded role, as perhaps the Grand Mufti of Europe; certainly he would be better placed to appreciate our problems and issue the appropriate fatwa than some remote alim in Saudi Arabia or Pakistan who did not understand the western mentality and was unequipped alike by training and by disposition to cope with the kind of issues we



A semblance of normality! Bosnians stroll the streets of Zenica

confront.

The establishment of the Muslim Parliament in Britain prefigures the creation of similar political structures elsewhere. In France, Holland, Belgium and Germany; but, ultimately, it looks forward to an Islamic Parliament of Europe with headquarters in Sarajevo. This would not only protect us from the machinations of Middle Eastern regimes but would give Muslims living in Europe a degree of political power and protection undreamt of since the days of the Ottomans.

Bosnia itself is not immune against these machinations. Aid from Saudi sources is pouring in with the same disastrous consequences as in Afghanistan, raising the spectre of Bosnia—a Sufi country like Afghanistan—being rent apart by mistrust. The Salafi aid has strings attached: in education they seek to dictate the contents of the courses, but it seems that the recipients of aid are wise to their scheming and under a surface compliance, quietly modify the curricula stipulated by the donors: a highly intelligent people, the Bosnians were quick to spot the hidden agenda behind the Saudis' generosity.

In a building still sandbagged, facing the former Serb gun emplacements and appropriately overlooking the stadium-turned-cemetery, we found the offices of the War Crimes Commission. Our efforts at the War Crimes Watch in London seemed insignificant in comparison, so all we would do was to offer to share information.

Come departure and the long drive to Zagreb. As we passed through the devastated landscape, we wondered what the future could be for people facing an election whose chief purpose seemed to be to legitimate the de facto partition engineered at Dayton. One of the negotiators at Dayton had given personal assurances to our Zagreb hosts: “I promise you we will never give up the Drina.” But they did, thereby consigning all the loss of the land link between Bosnia and Sanjak. The result is the physical isolation of two Muslim peoples, who can now be picked off separately, a geographical blunder of the first magnitude. Mention of Dayton produced a negative reaction in everyone to whom we spoke; in consequence of these

accords the Muslim-Croat forces were forced to yield up recently-conquered territory in central/northern Bosnia, territories purchased with blood. The American intervention was timed to prevent an outright Muslim victory; it took place precisely when the Muslims were poised to win.

The Bosnia-Croatia border reveals the same devastation on either side; not till one reaches Zagreb is one really out of a war zone. The Croats talk of what took place in Krajina with bated breath. The Serbs, it seems, were worse than the Mongols; at least the Mongols spared vegetation and wildlife; but the Serbs did not even leave a tree or a bear alive in Krajina. Europe retains pockets of barbarism in spite of its small size: Serbia is one, Bulgaria another. Croats, on the other hand, are a civilised people closely related to the age-old culture of Mitteleuropa. This much at least can be inferred from the infrequency with which Tudjman's portrait appears in public places in Zagreb we only saw it once, in a tourist shop on the main square. What a refreshing contrast from the sick cult of personality one encounters at every turn in the Muslim world, proof of a maturity Muslims can only wonder at.

Sixty percent of Croats, including all the Zagreb area, want, we were assured, an alliance with the Muslims against the traditional enemy of both. We had no way of verifying these figures and had to take them on trust.

Two final observations. Here in Britain one hears a lot about Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid. Alas! we could find no evidence of their presence in Bosnia; not only did we not find any offices from which they were operating, no one to whom we spoke could identify any recipient of their largesse. But if money be in short supply amongst Muslims, at least UN officials do not lack for cash. At Zagreb we witnessed a good example of the way in which the UN makes money. One could only get into or out of Sarajevo courtesy of the UN; they provided a plane, a pilot and co-pilot and charged for it. Many, perhaps most, NATO generals in Europe are on the take; it was interesting to see the UN at work.

Muslimmedia International



An Israeli soldier observes Palestinian and Israeli doctors examine long-time peace campaigner Uri Avenri, 74, after fainting from the heat wave during a joint Palestinian-Israeli protest near Jabal Abu Ghneim, last Sunday

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Une rencontre Arafat-Lévy prévue à Malte

Le président de l'Autorité nationale palestinienne Yasser Arafat (notre photo) et le chef de la diplomatie israélienne David Lévy doivent se rencontrer aujourd'hui à Malte en marge de la deuxième conférence euro-méditerranéenne qui s'est ouverte hier à La Valette pour deux jours. Si elle a bien lieu, cette rencontre sera la première entre le chef de l'Autorité nationale palestinienne et un membre du gouvernement israélien depuis trois mois. L'initiative de cette rencontre revient à l'Union européenne qui cherche à relancer le processus de paix, en panne depuis la mise en chantier par Israël le 18 mars dernier d'une nouvelle colonie juive dans le secteur arabe de Jérusalem. Les ministres des Affaires étrangères de 27 pays du bassin méditerranéen se réunissent depuis hier à Malte pour tenter de relancer leur partenariat. Les 15 ministres européens des Affaires étrangères veulent convaincre leurs douze partenaires méditerranéens, dont Israël et les Palestiniens, que la conférence de Malte ne doit pas être uniquement consacrée au problème du blocage du processus de paix. Cependant, les pays arabes désirent que les principes de référence du processus enclenché à Madrid en 1991 soient rappelés dans la déclaration de Malte, à savoir l'évacuation des territoires arabes occupés en échange de la paix avec Israël et l'application des résolutions du Conseil de sécurité.



SELON

Il existe dans le monde entier une certaine courtoisie se traduisant par des formules quotidiennes de salut qui peuvent, parfois, refléter le moral d'un peuple. «Comment ça va?» n'est en effet pas qu'une simple manière de saluer avec n'importe quelle personne pendant la journée.

D'après une observation personnelle, la majorité des Jordaniens se satisfont d'habitude d'une réponse très négative à une telle question, du genre «pas mal», «je survise», ou «comme ci, comme ça». La réponse positive «tout va très bien» se fait elle assez rare!

La raison qui m'amène à aborder un tel phénomène de société est que je viens de rentrer d'Irak où j'ai pu noter une attitude complètement différente. Les habitants de ce pays au passé glorieux expriment dans leur réponse au salut quotidien un optimisme exceptionnel.

«Grâce à la générosité de Dieu, tout va bien». Une réponse surprenante quand on sait que celui qui vous répond si positivement n'a pas même le minimum vital des pauvres résidant en Jordanie.

En fait, les conditions de vie des Irakiens ces six dernières années ne peuvent pas être qualifiées de normales. Le chômage est un problème majeur. Son fort taux tient notamment aux salaires si bas qu'ils couvrent à peine les frais de transport. Cela crée donc une barrière entre la vie dite normale et celle des citoyens qui disposent à peine du minimum vital. En ce qui concerne la disponibilité de la nourriture, tout est là. Le marché irakien est une vitrine des produits jordaniens et turcs. Mais faute de moyens pour les acheter, ces produits restent en exposition.

Néanmoins, les ressortissants du pays du Tigre et de l'Euphrate ont su conserver une mentalité positive. Malgré toutes les tragédies qui ont frappé le peuple irakien, il arrive à garder un moral fort pour continuer à lutter et retrouver une vie soi-disant «normale».

C'est peut-être parce que ce peuple appartient à une civilisation si ancienne que l'espoir et l'optimisme sont devenus des caractéristiques de sa mentalité. Ou bien est-ce parce que chacun d'eux se sent obligé de préserver le mieux possible l'héritage de cette civilisation de «la terre fertile des deux rivières»? Je trouve que ce peuple au passé si glorieux a su garder un profil amical qui s'inscrit dans la droite ligne de son Histoire, et ce en dépit de toutes les crises successives qu'il a vécues.

Il paraît que les guerres qui frappent les nations n'annulent pas le moral des peuples, mais au contraire, renforcent sa combativité. Chacun est amené à relever un défi, celui de sa survie. Et les conflits qui frappent les nations peuvent alors devenir une source de motivation pour reconstruire l'avenir.

En Irak, les habitants semblent être prêts à relever ce défi.

Oroub et Abed

Priorité aux affaires intérieures

Trois semaines après sa nomination, le Premier ministre jordanien Abdel Salem Majali a tenu sa première conférence de presse. Il a fixé les priorités de son cabinet qui concernent essentiellement la préparation des prochaines élections législatives.

Après trois semaines d'accalmie relative, due essentiellement au voyage du roi Hussein aux Etats-Unis accompagné par le Premier ministre Abdel Salem Majali, la situation politique intérieure a retrouvé son rythme habituel au lendemain de la conférence de presse tenue samedi dernier par M. Majali, la première depuis la formation du nouveau gouvernement le 20 mars dernier.

Le Premier ministre jordanien l'a clairement précisé: ce sont les affaires intérieures qui ont la priorité pour le gouvernement. Avec deux volets principaux: les élections législatives prévues pour novembre prochain et le redressement de la situation économique.

La rencontre entre les sénateurs et le Premier ministre dimanche dernier représentait une occasion pour recueillir diverses opinions à propos de la loi électorale. Il est certain aujourd'hui que celle-ci sera amendée et promulguée dans les semaines à venir sous forme d'une loi provisoire.

Si les voix qui s'opposent aux orientations du gouvernement sont rares parmi les sénateurs, en revanche, elles sont plus nombreuses au sein de la Chambre des députés qui ne siège plus actuellement en session ordinaire. Un certain nombre de députés envisagent déjà de présenter un mémorandum au pouvoir exécutif pour demander une révision du nombre de sièges et l'augmentation de 80 à 100 ou 120 sièges. Cette revendication est justifiée par la nouvelle division administrative du Royaume hachémite. Quatre nouveaux gouvernements ont été créés, ce qui implique leur représentation au sein du pouvoir législatif.

Pour le moment, le gouvernement ne révèle pas ses intentions ou ses cartes. La raison en est simple: le gouvernement n'a pas encore discuté les amendements qu'il souhaite introduire dans cette loi. Les partis de l'opposition ne croient pas à cette version, car, rappellent-ils, le ministre de l'Intérieur Nazir Rashid a dévoilé voilà deux semaines certaines des intentions gouvernementales. Il a ainsi confirmé que le système de la voix unique, l'âge électoral à 19 ans et le nombre de circonscriptions seraient maintenus. Autrement dit, trois points contre lesquels l'opposition lutte depuis plusieurs mois. Un dernier point dans ce volet électoral n'est pas sans importance: le Premier ministre jordanien Abdel Salem Majali a refusé, comme il l'avait déjà fait en 1993, la supervision de ces élections législatives par des observateurs internationaux (voir encadré).



De nombreuses modalités restent encore à fixer pour les élections législatives prévues pour cet automne.

Les observateurs bienvenus mais pas invités

Le Premier ministre jordanien Abdel Salem Majali a rejeté cette semaine une demande des islamistes qui souhaitaient la présence d'observateurs arabes ou internationaux pour surveiller le déroulement des prochaines élections législatives. Précisant qu'il n'y aurait pas d'invitation officielle, M. Majali a déclaré que «tous ceux qui souhaitent venir et observer étaient les bienvenus», réaffirmant l'engagement de son gouvernement de procéder à des élections libres et justes.

M. Majali a par ailleurs indiqué que toutes les modalités de ce scrutin n'avaient pas encore été définies. Leur date précise n'est par exemple pas fixée. Selon le député centriste Ahdoul Ra'ouf Rawabdeh, ces élections doivent avoir lieu entre le mois de juillet et de novembre, selon la constitution.

Le Front de l'Action islamique, ainsi que plusieurs partis d'opposition, demandent au gouvernement de revoir la loi électorale actuelle, et notamment le découpage des circonscriptions afin que celles-ci tiennent mieux compte de la répartition de la population sur le sol jordanien. Actuellement, les six districts électoraux d'Amman (38% de la population jordanienne) disposent de 26% des sièges à l'Assemblée, soit à peine un peu plus que les districts de Madaba, Kerak, Tafleeh et Ma'an qui ne représentent que 9,5% de la population. Selon le ministre de l'Intérieur Nazir Rashid, un nouveau découpage devrait être prochainement annoncé.

Portrait Une architecture porteuse de valeurs

Installé à Amman depuis 1972, Rassem Badran cherche à développer une architecture islamique et un langage architectural arabe contemporain. Son œuvre abondante englobe maisons individuelles et complexes institutionnels. La reconstruction de la mosquée Qasr Al'Horm en Arabie saoudite, lui a valu le prix Aga Khan en 1995, une haute distinction internationale.

Né à Jérusalem

En 1945, Rassem Badran baigne dès son enfance dans une atmosphère artistique. Son père, Jamal Badran, est une figure connue dans le monde de l'ornementation islamique. Il a participé à la rénovation de la mosquée Al Aqsa et à la décoration du Dôme du rocher à Jérusalem.

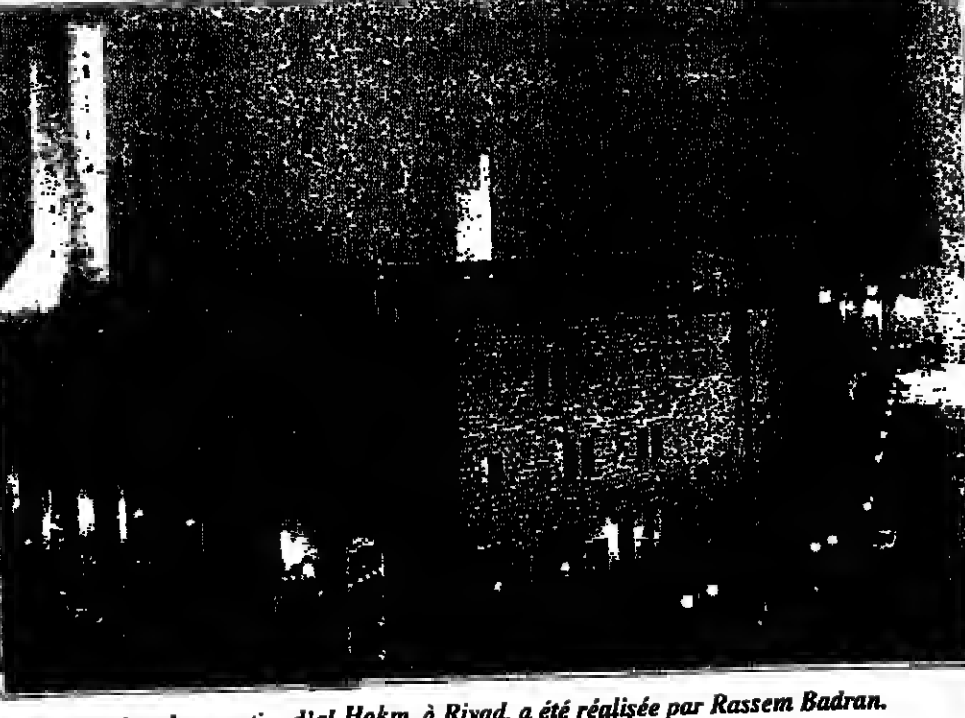
Rassem, lui, opte pour l'architecture. En 1964, il s'inscrit à l'université de Darmstadt, en Allemagne. Brillant étudiant, il sortira premier de sa promotion. Il s'associe avec un groupe de jeunes architectes allemands et participe, notamment, au projet de création de Théâtre du futur et au stade olympique de Munich.

En 1972, il passe par Amman. Mais il est loin d'imaginer qu'il va y rester. «Je n'avais aucune intention de m'installer en Jordanie», avoue Rassem Badran. «Mais pendant mon séjour, des amis m'ont demandé de concevoir un projet pour une maison individuelle destinée à la famille Khoury. C'était la première maison que je dessinais, mais je la considère toujours comme la plus réussie. Elle reflète les préoccupations qui me tiennent encore aujourd'hui à cœur, à savoir les relations organiques entre l'architecture et son environnement climatique, social et culturel. Par exemple, alors qu'il est d'usage de faire de grandes fenêtres étroites en calculant leur hauteur pour que le soleil entre en hiver mais pas en été. Selon la morale islamique, le statut social du propriétaire ne doit pas se refléter dans la façade de sa maison, puisque la rue appartient à tout le monde et que nous sommes tous égaux devant Dieu. C'est pourquoi la façade de la maison Khoury est très modeste, bien que la famille à laquelle elle appartient soit riche. Je crois que le rôle de l'architecture est d'être porteuse de certaines valeurs.»

Après la villa Khoury, les commandes affluent pour le jeune architecte: maisons individuelles, hôpitaux, écoles... Ses réalisations gagnent alors de nombreuses distinctions en Jordanie et à l'étranger, telles que la mosquée de Bagdad, la Fondation Al-Bait à Amman...

En 1995, la reconstruction de la mosquée, et du quartier Qasr al-Hokm, au cœur de Riyad, est couronnée par le prix d'architecture Aga Khan. Fidèle à ses préoccupations sur la relation entre architecture et environnement, Rassem Badran a étudié minutieusement le climat, ainsi que les traditions culturelles et religieuses pour recréer les caractéristiques de l'architecture Najdi, sans la recopier. Il y a intégré des matériaux nouveaux, tels que le béton armé, ainsi que des techniques nouvelles comme l'air conditionné. Le jury a apprécié «la capacité de cet architecte à recréer un complexe urbain moderne tout en gardant l'essence de son cadre traditionnel».

Aujourd'hui, Rassem Badran continue de participer à de nombreux projets en Jordanie et dans les pays voisins. Et c'est en terre palestinienne qu'il travaille actuellement, sur un projet de rénovation à Naplouse.



La rénovation du quartier d'al-Hokm, à Riyad, a été réalisée par Rassem Badran.

En 1995, la reconstruction de la mosquée, et du quartier Qasr al-Hokm, au cœur de Riyad, est couronnée par le prix d'architecture Aga Khan. Fidèle à ses préoccupations sur la relation entre architecture et environnement, Rassem Badran a étudié minutieusement le climat, ainsi que les traditions culturelles et religieuses pour recréer les caractéristiques de l'architecture Najdi, sans la recopier. Il y a intégré des matériaux nouveaux, tels que le béton armé, ainsi que des techniques nouvelles comme l'air conditionné. Le jury a apprécié «la capacité de cet architecte à recréer un complexe urbain moderne tout en gardant l'essence de son cadre traditionnel».

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Rassem Badran

Presse Majali doit passer à l'action

Le dossier de la privatisation des deux plus grands quotidiens jordaniens traîne maintenant depuis quatre ans. Et selon la loi, M. Majali n'a plus qu'un mois pour procéder à cette opération.

L'un des dossiers urgents

du nouveau gouvernement de M. Majali concerne la privatisation des deux plus grands quotidiens jordaniens, une opération annoncée voilà maintenant quatre ans. Il ne lui reste en effet que 30 jours pour céder au moins 32% des actions d'Al Ra'i et 2% de celles d'Al Doustour.

Alors que le gouvernement de M. Kabariati prônait la privatisation des moyens de communication, il n'a pas réussi en treize mois d'exercice à appliquer une politique claire vis-à-vis de la loi sur la presse et la publication, tout comme les gouvernements qui l'avaient précédé depuis l'adoption de cette loi en 1993.

En effet, la loi sur la presse et la publication de 1993, qui est entrée en vigueur au mois de mai de la même année, stipule que la participation des finances publiques, contrôlée par le conseil des ministres, ne doit pas dépasser 30% du capital des journaux.

Or, le gouvernement totalise actuellement 32% des actions du quotidien Al Doustour et 62% des actions du quotidien Al Ra'i.

Etant donné que la participation des caisses publiques dans les capitaux des journaux dépassait ce seuil de 30% défini par la loi, le gouvernement s'est accordé en 1993 un délai de deux ans pour adapter sa position, avec possibilité de prolonger ce délai de deux années supplémentaires. Or, l'échéance de ces quatre années arrive à terme le 17 mai prochain.

Au cours d'un de ses conférences hebdomadaires de presse, l'ancien ministre de l'Information Marwan Mouasher avait déclaré que la vente des actions qui détiennent les caisses publiques allait être tranchée avant la fin du mois de janvier, ajoutant alors que cette opération aux conséquences financières importantes était toujours à l'étude.



Seif al Sharif

Un pas en arrière

Malgré la démission de M. Kabariati à la fin du mois de mars, et la situation est toujours la même aujourd'hui. Par conséquent, le gouvernement de M. Majali doit agir rapidement pour appliquer la loi. Il dispose de deux options: la vente des actions excédentaires uniquement, ou bien la vente de toutes les actions au profit du secteur privé. Or, selon une déclaration récente du nouveau ministre d'Etat chargé de l'Information, Samir Mutaweh, le nouveau gouvernement ne détiendra pas après le 17 mai plus de 30% de ces journaux. Si telle était sa décision, elle équivaudrait à un pas en arrière puisque la loi de privatisation et de li-

béralisation du précédent gouvernement voulait que toutes les actions soient vendues.

Le retrait du gouvernement de ces grands journaux n'ait en effet dans le sens d'une libéralisation de la presse. Voilà quelques semaines, le président du syndicat des journalistes jordaniens Seif Al Sharif, exprimant plus particulièrement le point de vue des actionnaires privés, avait appelé le gouvernement à mettre fin à ses investissements dans les journaux. Il considère en effet que la situation actuelle va à l'encontre des plus simples règles démocratiques. Et il avait insisté sur l'importance de la liberté de la presse, condition sine qua non pour permettre aux journaux de jouer leur rôle dans un régime démocratique.

Hussein Abo-Rumman

Football Des débuts inquiétants pour la Jordanie

Au terme des matchs-aller de la première phase des qualifications pour la Coupe du monde, la Jordanie compte un nul et une défaite. Un bilan inquiétant pour la suite de la compétition.

En s'inclinant

lundi sur le score de 1 à 0 contre l'équipe du Bahreïn, la Jordanie a terminé la phase aller du premier tour qualificatif pour la Coupe du monde de football de 1998 avec un bilan plutôt décevant. Une semaine auparavant, elle n'avait en effet réussi qu'à obtenir un match nul contre les Emirats arabes unis.

La Jordanie, qui avec 1 point occupe la dernière place de son groupe, se retrouve dans une position délicate pour espérer se qualifier pour la suite de la compétition. Elle doit obligatoirement s'imposer dans les deux matchs-retour qu'il lui reste à disputer. Ceux-ci auront lieu les 19 et 26 avril, aux Emirats arabes unis. L'équipe jordanienne dispose donc de quelques jours pour parfaire son collectif, et notamment revoir son attaque qui n'a pas marqué un seul but lors de ces deux rencontres.

Si la Jordanie parvient à do-

miner cette semaine ses deux adversaires, il ne lui restera plus qu'à espérer que les équipes du Bahreïn et des Emirats arabes unis fassent match nul ou bien que le Bahreïn gagne, ce qui lui permettrait de terminer en tête de sa poule.

Mais pour l'équipe des Emirats, le fait de jouer à domicile sera un gros avantage, et la tâche de l'équipe jordanienne s'avère très difficile.

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Exposition

Patricia Châtelain, jusqu'au 27 avril au CCCL.

Cinéma

Cycle Duos au masculin au CCCL.
Le 21 avril à 20h30, Les spécialistes (1984), de Patrice Leconte. Avec Bernard Giraudeau et Gérard Lanvin.
Le 28 avril à 20h30, Tandem (1987) de Patrice Leconte avec Jean Rochefort et Gérard Jugnot.
Le 29 avril à 19h00, à la Fondation Shoman, Toto le Héros (1991) de Jaco Van Dormael.

Conférence

Les sites antiques du Wadi Rum: épigraphie et archéologie.
Une conférence proposée par Farès Drappeau et Laurent Tholbecq de l'Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient.
Le 27 avril à 18h00 au CCCL.

En raison de l'Aïd al Adha, le Star ne sera pas dans les kiosques jeudi prochain, le 24 avril. Le Jourdain souhaite une joyeuse fête à ses lecteurs et leur donne rendez-vous pour le 1er mai.

- Royal Cultural Centre
American Centre Library
British Council
French Cultural Centre
Goethe Institute
Cervantes Institute (Spanish)
Turkish Cultural Centre
Haya Arts Centre
Y.W.C.A.
Dar al Funun
Alfa Art Gallery
Al-Jadida Art Gallery
Nabulsi Art Theatre
Nabulsi & Hisham's Theatre

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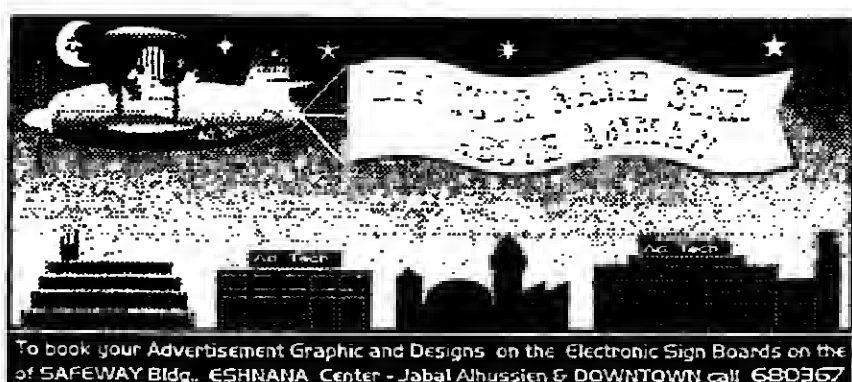
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Haya Arts Centre	665195	Royal Automobile Club	815410
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THE STAR'S WORKING STATION COMPUTING & HIGH TECH NOV

Edited by Zeid Nasser

CEB appointed as the sole distributor for Microcom:

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COMPUTER & Engineering Bureau (CEB) has announced its appointment as the authorized and sole distributor for Microcom products in Jordan.

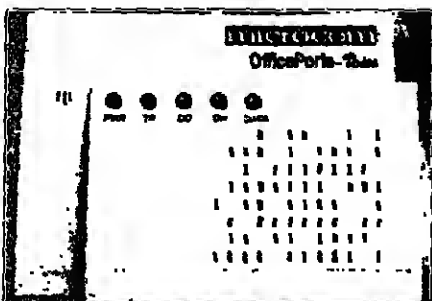
Microcom is a well-known name worldwide in the fields of communications, particularly in remote access and central site communications solutions. These solutions include a wide range of modems, that suit different needs for users at all levels, and communications management solutions and software.

The solutions offered by Microcom are of importance, due to the fact that they enter to the fast-paced changes in the modern business environment, which includes today, two main types of communication: central site communications and remote access communications.

Remote access communications, in particular, are emerging as a major area due to advancements in Internet technologies and networking in general, enabling the easier flow and exchange of information inside and outside the office.

Since its establishment in 1981, Microcom has been a pioneer in the fields of data communications which has positioned the company today as a leader in the development and distribution of communication

solutions worldwide, through focus on the massive opportunities in the field of networking, with the rise of the Internet and the Intranet. Starting in the early nineties, Microcom has played a key role in providing modern technologies to some of the largest modern manufacturers in the world. In fact, the



MNP benchmark, used to measure the performance of modems, actually refers to 'Microcom Networks Protocol'.

As for Microcom's remote access solutions, they include a number of modems and communications software that provide secure and consistent communications. Among the family of modems, there is the Desk Port range for mainstream users and the Travel Port range for notebook users (or users on the move). In addition, there is a special series of modems produced by Micro-

com, known as the FAST Travel Port and FAST Desk Port, that offers optimized performance with Microsoft Windows, utilizing the Advanced Parallel Technology (APT) available in Windows. All these modems provide a speed of 28.8 kbps. For users with more advanced needs, there's the Office Port modem that provides a variety of added features such as voice mail, speaker phone and more. It offers a speed of 33.6 kbps.

As part of Microcom's software solutions, there's 'Carbon Copy' which is a feature-rich remote access software package that enables remote users to communicate with any PC running either Windows or DOS, over standard dial-up or Internet access lines.

Carbon Copy supports both Netscape Navigator Plug in and Microsoft Explorer ActiveX interfaces.

As for central site solutions, products include Microcom Access Integrator which offers a robust, fault-tolerant design geared to complex, enterprise-wide networks. It is architected to help mainframe and mini-computer users to make the move to LAN application environments. Among Microcom's other products is the High Density Management Systems (HOMS) which provides

How 'Michele's Cocktail' arrives into your TV: Arab Satellites, beam your favorite Arab channels

By Jawad Abbassi
Special to The Star

WHEN ONE sees the abundant satellite dishes on the rooftops of Amman, it is natural to conclude that many Jordanians probably spend their days in front of a TV watching CNN's late-breaking news, NBC's national geographic, ART's latest Arabic pop songs or Future TV's Cocktail's trivia show.

When rotating their dishes to receive their favorite shows, Jordanians use the different satellite systems that cover Jordan's area.

For example LBC, Future, and the satellite channels of most Arab countries use the famous Arab Satellite systems of ArabSat.

These communications satellites systems currently in operation, including ArabSat, are of the "Geo-Stationary" type; they revolve around the earth in the same speed of its own revolution around itself, thus they remain in a fixed location relative to the earth.

The "Geo-Stationary" satellites, which orbit the earth at very high altitudes, are used for broadcasting and traditional communications services. New technologies promise the use of "non-geo-stationary" satellites to offer seamless communications around the globe through hand held devices (i.e. a cellular phone that would function all around the world).

These "non-geo-stationary" satellites orbit the earth at much lower altitudes, called low earth orbits (LEO) and medium earth

orbits (MEO). The International Telecommunications Union has already started a forum to discuss these LEO and MEO systems and the legal implications they present regarding licensing and national sovereignty.

Back to the geo-stationary ArabSat, it was established in 1979 by the Arab Ministers of Information conference and it includes membership from most of the Arab countries.

The first two satellites of



ArabSat were launched in 1985 by NASA and Arian, working under a contract with ArabSat. The two satellites, part ArabSat's first generation, provided telecommunications services and TV channels for the Arab countries.

For the second generation of ArabSat, an agreement was concluded with Acomspace in 1993 to manufacture two satellites each offering 26 channels at a total cost of \$257.9 million. The first of the two second generation satellites was placed in orbit in 1996 while the second one will be placed in orbit in early 1998. ArabSat reckons that its

total revenues from these satellites will reach \$1 billion over their total operational life.

However, ArabSat is poised to have competition from other Arab organizations entering the Satellite TV channels provision market. The Egyptian satellite company NileSat, owned by the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU), National Bank of Egypt, Banque du Caire, the Egyptian Company for Investment Projects and the Arab Organization for Industrialization, aims to make money by leasing satellite channels to television broadcasters. According to a report by Reuters, NileSat contracted a consortium led by the French firm Marconi to build and launch its satellite by November 1997 at a total value of \$158 million. NileSat's control station will be in Cairo's satellite city and will be set up in October 1997.

The advent of NileSat will inevitably make establishing more Arab TV channels a more lucrative business as competition with ArabSat will pull down the costs on broadcasters. The Egyptians, in line with Egypt's status as the greater sister to all Arab Countries, have indeed made a smart move to offer Arab TV channels such a service.

As for the Arab viewers, in Jordan and elsewhere, whether Michele's Cocktail is broadcast through NileSat or ArabSat is of no great consequence at all, since they would still hear Michele adopting his popular phrase to the "net" situation, by saying, "Two Arab satellite companies, la'likum!"

INTERFACE BY ZEID NASSER

Win-tel rules the PC world

WELL, if you're wondering what the term 'Win-tel' means, then you would be surprised to know that you've probably got a Win-tel computer sitting on your desk; that is, if your machine is an Intel-based personal computer (486 or Pentium) running a version of Microsoft Windows.

The term Win-tel is short for Windows/Intel, resembling the meeting of two wide-spread standards set by Microsoft and Intel, manifested in the IBM PC and compatibles.

For over 15 years, Win-tel PCs have been going strong and represent the absolute dominant standard today. This is in spite of challenges from the likes of Apple Macintosh, Silicon Graphics and other proprietary operating systems.

The point is that the Microsoft Windows/Intel microprocessor architecture looks set to dominate for the foreseeable future, which is a source of displeasure to concerned parties like users of other brands. It seems like the Mac versus Win-tel argument has gone on for ever, as has the PowerPC versus Win-tel argument (which is dwindling due to the lack of challenge from the supposedly mighty PowerPC).

For most of us, any computer system that will 'do the job' as well as a reasonable price is good. With dropping prices of Win-tel PCs, and with more and more supporters of other standards defecting to Win-tel computers, it doesn't look like the future holds any surprises.

In fact, Microsoft is developing Windows for other devices, such as hand held computers, personal communicators and more. These will probably include Intel processors too. So, there's more to come.

Books@Cafe:

The first Internet cafe in Jordan

THE FIRST and, so far, only Internet and book shop cafe opened in Amman last month amidst much enthusiasm and a continuous flow of visitors of all ages and walks of life.

Visitors are offered Internet access at the rate of JD 5 per hour (JD 2.5 per half hour) utilizing one of four computer systems. Naturally, you can enjoy a cup of coffee and some cake while you surf the net.

Also, the cafe offers a variety of books, newspapers and magazines making it a hub for Amman's book-loving audience too. Apparently, the cafe is already very popular and it is gaining more clientele all the time. Books@Cafe is located in Jabal Amman, First Circle. For more information, call 650457.

Apple, on the way to recovery

WELL, it looks like Apple is down but not out, as there seems to be renewed confidence by investors in the company, which has resulted in a rise in Apple's stock.

What's more, leading international investors such as Prince Waleed Bin Talal of Saudi Arabia have bought shares in the ailing company.

Prince Waleed has acquired five percent of Apple out of faith that the company has a brighter future ahead. Also, rumors that Apple may soon be sold have helped drive the stock up.

It looks like that Apple's efforts to recover should bear fruit, as for the matter of selling the company, there is no official comment yet. Apple is hard at work on a whole new line of Macintosh products, which will hit the market soon.

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PSG looking for European form in second-place battle

PARIS—Paris St Germain are hoping to carry their fine European form into the French first division on Tuesday for the clash at Bastia, their chief rivals for France's second Champions' League berth.

PSG surprised even themselves with a 3-0 home victory over Liverpool in the first leg of their Cup Winners' Cup semifinal last Thursday after a dismal 1-1 draw against Rennes at the Parc des Princes five days earlier.

"Now it's Bastia and it's of capital importance because there is this great fight for the second place," PSG's French international defender Bruno N'Gotty said. N'Gotty said the trip will be tougher without influential Brazilian Raf, captain and midfield inspiration, and Benoit Calet, who scored against Liverpool, because both suspended.

"It's a big problem. But like every time this season that we've managed a positive result, we can't line up the

same team for the next match," he said.

PSG have accepted that second place for the third season in a row is the best they can manage on the domestic front.

Defeat in Corsica will virtually hand the championship to Monaco if the leaders, 12 points ahead with six games to go, win at Bordeaux on Wednesday.

PSG will also have to reshuffle the defence as they are deprived of full back Didier Domi through injury. Jimmy Almerino will probably take the right back berth, with Laurent Fourrier moving into midfield to stand in for Jerome Leroy, who will move into the middle to take Raf's place. Bernard Allou should stand in for Calet.

N'Gotty is looking forward to a tough clash at the Futani stadium, one of the venues with most atmosphere in French football.



A scene from the Bordeaux-Strasbourg match as part of the French finals where in French football.

"We know that at Bastia you have to put your foot in, because in any

case they do. It's just necessary for that to remain within normal proportions," N'Gotty warned.

"Furiani is Furiani, there's always a super atmosphere. I love playing there, apart from last season, when on the first day I injured my ankle in the first minute."

Bastia were hoping the French football authorities would on Monday pass a safe the new top addition to one of their stadia: which would allow another 1,500 people into the match.

"It's an all-ticket match and the (1,500) extra places have already been reserved," said striker Wilfried Gohel.

Bastia have played more recently than PSG, having drawn 2-2 at Cuen on Friday in a match postponed because of a waterlogged pitch in February.

Cosch Frederic Antonetti will not let PSG's poor league form fill him into a false sense of security.

"Despite everything that's been said about this Parisian team, I maintain that they are very solid, especially in defence," he said.

Antonetti is forced to change the centre of his defence because of the suspensions of Patrick Valety and Jean-Jacques Eydelie and doubts over the recovery from injury of Poland's Piotr Swierczewski.

Shaq, Lakers end Jazz's 15-game Winning streak, 100-98

By Scott Howard-Cooper

INGLEWOOD, California—As if the Utah Jazz vs. Shaquille O'Neal didn't turn out to be a big enough mismatch Sunday afternoon, there was Nik Van Exel against Shaquille O'Neal. Against his body, if only for a moment following a leap.

"No smarter," O'Neal said. But understandable. Van Exel had the best of intentions when he learned what it's like to chest bump a brick wall after a running start, wanting to leap into the arms of O'Neal in celebration and maybe even be carried for an instant. The way O'Neal had just carried the Los Angeles Lakers in a dramatic 100-98 victory before 17,505 at the Forum that broke the Jazz's 15-game winning streak.

O'Neal, in only his second game back after nearly two months out, missed 11 of his first 14 shots, then made another impressive recovery. He scored 39 points, two shy of his season high. He grabbed 13 rebounds. And, not simply responding by connecting on 11 of his next 15 attempts, he also hit the game-winning shot at the buzzer, a fall-away 14-footer on the left baseline.

So it was the Lakers' biggest man who came through on their biggest day of the season. Their victory, combined with the Seattle SuperSonics getting crushed by the Houston Rockets, moved the Lakers back into a first-place tie with the SuperSonics for the lead in the Pacific Division and the No. 2 spot in the West.

As if what went on in Inglewood wouldn't have been enough.

The Lakers got the victory, and revenge. They had lost the first three games to the Jazz by an average of 17.7 points at that, and were in danger of being swept for the first time in the season series.

Beyond that, the Lakers had put extra weight on this final meeting of the regular season. It would not only be a test against the team that will finish the regular season No. 1 in conference, but what they viewed as a true test because it would be the first of the four games when the Jazz had not been off the night before while the Lakers played and traveled.

This time, both had Saturday



off. When O'Neal then started to take Sunday off, missing several two-footers in the first quarter and five of six shots in all, there was concern on the Laker sideline.

"To put it in a word," Coach Del Harris said, "yes."

Things quickly began to look better. O'Neal went a more respectable five of 11 from the field in the second quarter, then got word at halftime in the locker room from team physician Dr. Steve Lombardo, impressed at how the all-star center had been moving, that all time restrictions had been lifted.

It was probably only supposed to be until the end of the game anyway, but that gave Harris the green light to stay with O'Neal as long as he needed. So O'Neal went another 10 minutes in the third quarter, giving him 29 for the day. Then he went off.

Playing the entire fourth quarter, making 11 of 14 minutes in all, and made five of his first eight shots of the period. That set the stage for the real heroics, after a timeout with 10.2 seconds left.

"Big Fella said coming out

of the timeout that, 'No matter what happened, get me the ball and the game will be over.'"

Van Exel said, "So we got him the ball and the game was over."

Just not exactly according to plan. Eddie Jones threw the ball into Van Exel, who dribbled from right to left and looked inside. And then continued to look. Seconds were disappearing.

The problem was that Jones, instead of coming around a screen, stood, too close to O'Neal. So Jones' man, Bryon Russell, was available for a quick double-team. The clock now down to about three, Van Exel had no choice but to make the pass then.

O'Neal caught it, then drifted back to avoid Russell and Greg Ostertag, and shot. When it went through at the buzzer, the Lakers celebrated. O'Neal screaming and Van Exel jumping into his arms. At least before bouncing off.

"He almost knocked me down," Van Exel said.

LATimes-Washington Post News Service

Juventus coach says 'We're not robots'

TURIN, Italy—Team coach Marcello Lippi has given Juventus a two-day holiday this week, after his exhausted European champions crashed 3-0 to Udinese Sunday.

Lippi blamed Juventus' defeat, their first to Udinese for 35 years and their first at the Delle Alpi stadium all season, on tired legs.

"They are men, not robots," Lippi said, highlighting their last week's away wins over AC Milan and Ajax Amsterdam. "There's no point making a drama out of it."

"I've no reason to be angry or to criticise any member of a squad who have had an exceptional season up until now. And I'm not just talking about our previous two matches."

"You can't even point to individual mistakes on a day when everything went wrong—they just had nothing left to give. So I've decided to let them have two days off—even though we're playing on

Saturday.

"This way, they'll have time to re-charge their batteries in peace and quiet."

Juventus missed two second-half penalties and their defeat was all the more embarrassing as Udinese had only 10 men. The visitors' new Belgian defender Regis Genaux showed a dubious grasp of Italian with a third minute insult to the referee which won him an instant red card.

Lippi also brushed off the fact that Juventus' lead in the Serie A has been halved to three points after Parma's win over AS Roma. "I've always said that the championship isn't over yet," he said. "There are still seven matches left and that's a long way to go."

The players echoed Lippi's comments to a man. Midfielder Angelo Di Livio said: "We were perhaps a bit tired after two great but tiring matches like the ones we had. But that's only normal—we're not

robots, don't forget."

"And anyway, after so much praise, a little criticism probably won't do us any harm. Now we've just got to roll up our sleeves and get back to being the real Juventus."

Striker Nicola Amoroso added: "We've spent an enormous amount of energy over the past week and we weren't able to recover in time."

"We've still got a three-point lead and obviously, we can't afford to make any more mistakes. But nobody here is going to let things slip."

Skipper Antonio Conte, given an ovation on his return after six months away after cruciate ligament surgery, summed up the shock result. "It's just an isolated incident," he said. "Missing two penalties and losing to 10 men is not something that happens every day."